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# MOLIÈRE AND THE RESTORATION COMEDY IN ENGLAND.

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*Thesis accepted for the Degree of Docteur ès Lettres of Rennes University.*

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# PREFACE.

Thomas D'Urfey (1630-1723), a minor writer of comedy belonging to the period of dramatic literature with which it is proposed to deal, has inserted a song in "Sir Barnaby Whig" (1681) which contains this line:

"Molière is quite rifled, then how should I write?"

It is intended to show, in the following pages, to what extent the English comic dramatists who wrote during the period ranging between 1660 and the year of the death of Queen Anne, had recourse for ideas to Molière, his contemporaries, and immediate followers, and what was the nature of the influence so imparted. The following is an outline of the dissertation:

Introduction.—1. General survey of Molière's influence upon the literatures of Europe. 2. The deep impression made by Molière upon the minds of the English, as manifested in the Preface to "Select Comedies of Molière" (1732). 3. The Abbé Prévost's description of the popularity of Molière in England. 4. Dramatic criticisms of Frenchmen who were in England during the years following the Restoration. 5. Prevailing love for the theatres. 6. General influence, other than that of the drama, of France upon England at the time of the Restoration.

Chapter I.—Influence of the French comic drama upon the first generation of dramatists who shared with Dryden in the foundation of a classic or regular drama in England. This includes the following names: Davenant, Dryden, Etherege, Shadwell, Sedley.

Chapter II.—Influence of Molièresque comedy upon those comic dramatists who appeared early in the seventies. The leading name of this class is Wycherley, with the subsidiary figures of Otway, Mrs. Behn, and Crown.

Chapter III.—Influence of Molièresque comedy upon the group of playwrights who made their appearance at the very close of the century, and who were divided by more than thirty years from the Restoration. The principal comic writers in this section are Congreve, Colley Cibber, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar.

Chapter IV.—Vast superiority of Molière over the English writers from the point of view of dramatic construction.

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Chapter V.—Molière's adroit combination of realism with idealism in contrast with the crude realism of the English dramatists.

There are also a brief concluding chapter and an Appendix; the latter contains, in tabular form, all the names of comedies mentioned in the essay as having received influence from French comedy, and, in addition, the names of plays written by men of inferior ability, such as Ravenscroft, which have undergone a like influence. Notes are attached to the Appendix giving further information concerning certain plays. The intention of the writer has been to make this list as comprehensive as possible. While references to some of the points which form the subjects of discussion in this essay are not absent from earlier works, the object here has been to develop such points fully, and, by means of a first-hand acquaintance with the works concerned, and a special study of the relevant passages, to find out in each case the exact extent of the influence exerted by the French comedies upon the works of the English comic dramatists. Other points of resemblance and of evident influence have here been set forth for the first time; the comparison between Molière and the English writers from the point of view of dramatic construction, the investigation into the precise nature of the influence, and the general method of treatment are claimed to be original. The earliest editions obtainable of the English plays have in all instances been used, although more recent editions have also been consulted. The following list contains the names of the principal works which have been studied in connexion with this subject:

Airy (Osmund): Charles II.
Aitken: Edition of the Spectator (Vols. I.-VIII.).
Albert (Paul): 17e siècle.
Arnold (Thomas): History of English Literature.
Articles in the Retrospective Review (Vol. I.).
Aubrey: Brief Lives (1669-1696).
Betz: La Littérature Comparée (Strasbourg, 1900).
Brooke (Stopford): History of English Literature.
Brunetière: Epoques du théâtre and Etudes Critiques (especially the famous dissertation "Sur la Philosophie de Molière").
Burnet: The History of My Own Times.
Burnet: Some passages of the life and death of the Right Hon. John, Earl of Rochester (1680).
Chambers: Cyclopædia of English Literature.
Chappuzeau: L'Europe Vivante (1667).
Chateaubriand: La littérature anglaise.

Cibber (Colley) : Dissertation on the theatres.
Clarendon (Life of Edward, Earl of).
Cowden Clarke : Molière Characters.
Craik : History of English Literature.
Dametz : John Vanbrugh : Leben und Werke.
Demaus : History of English Literature.
Dennis : Letters.
Despois-Mesnard : ' Grands Ecrivains ' Edition of Molière.
Dibdin : English Stage.
Dictionary of National Biography.
Dobson : History of English Literature.
Dowden : History of French Literature.
Downes : Roscius Anglicanus (History of the Stage from 1660 to 1706).
Dryden : ' Essay of Dramatic Poesy ' and ' Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy.'
Encyclopædia Britannica.
Evelyn's Diary.
Faguet : 17e siècle.
Faguet : ' Drame Ancien, Drame Moderne.'
Flecknoe : ' Discourse on the English Stage.'
Fournel : ' Le théâtre au XVIIe siècle.'
Garnett (Robert) : The Age of Dryden.
Genest : English Stage.
Gosse (Edmund) : Seventeenth Century Studies.
Gosse (Edmund) : Eighteenth Century Literature.
Gosse (Edmund) : Life of William Congreve.
Hamilton (Anthony) : Memoirs of Count Grammont.
Hamilton - Thompson : Student's History of English Literature.
Hawkins : Origin of the Drama.
Hazlitt : Lectures on the English Comic Writers.
Heath's Chronicle.
Hillemacher : Molière : Œuvres Choisies.
Historia Histrionica (1669) (said to have been the production of James Wright).
Houston (Arthur) : Afternoon Lectures on English Literature.
Hume : History of England.
Hunt (Leigh) : The Dramatic Works of Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar.
Jesse : England under the Stuarts.
Johnson (Dr. Samuel) : Criticism of Congreve.
Jusserand : Shakespeare en France.
Kingsley (Charles) : Plays and Puritans.
La Chaussée (Nivelle de) : Epître de Clio.
Lamb (Charles) : On the Artificial Comedy of the last Century.

Langbaine : Account of the English Dramatic Poets.
Lanson : Histoire de la littérature française.
Larroumet : Edition of Molière's works.
Louandre (Charles) : Edition of Molière's works.
Louandre (Charles) : Edition of Racine's works.
Luttrell (Narcissus) : Diary.
Macaulay : Essay on the Comic Dramatists of the Restoration.
Meindl (Vincenz) : Sir George Etheredge, sein Leben, seine Zeit und seine Dramen.
Meredith (George) : An essay on Comedy and the uses of the Comic Spirit.
Misson : Mémoires et observations faites par un voyageur en Angleterre.
Moland : Molière, sa vie et ses ouvrages.
Morley : Introduction to adaptations of Molière.
Morley : First Sketch of English Literature.
Muralt : Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français et sur les Voyages (edition de 1725).
Pepys (Samuel) : Diary.
Petit de Julleville : La Langue et la Littérature française.
Petitot : Œuvres de Molière (vol. 1—Discours Préliminaire).
Posnett : Comparative Literature.
Preface to Select Comedies of Molière (1732).
Prévost : Le Pour et Contre (Vol. I.—Nombre IV.).
Prévost : Mémoires d'un Homme de Qualité.
Riccoboni : Account of the theatres of Europe.
Rossel (Virgile) : Histoire de la littérature française hors de France.
Saint-Evremond's writings.
Sarcey (Francisque) : Quarante Ans de Théâtre.
Saintsbury : Short History of French Literature.
Saintsbury : Short History of English Literature.
Sayous : La littérature française à l'étranger.
Scott : Essay on Drama.
Scott and Saintsbury : Works of Dryden.
Schlegel (A. W.) : A course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature.
Schmid (D) : William Congreve : sein Leben und seine Lustspiele.
Schmid (D) : George Farquhar : sein Leben und seine Original Dramen.
Shaw : History of English Literature.
Sorbière : Relation d'un Voyage en Angleterre (1664).
Stapfer : Molière et Shakespeare.
Stephen (Sir Leslie) : Ford Lectures (1903).
Taine : Histoire de la littérature anglaise.

Texte (J.) : Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les origines du cosmopolitisme littéraire (1895).
Thackeray : English Humourists of the 18th century.
Trevelyan (G. M.) : England under the Stuarts (1904).
Van Laun : History of French Literature.
Verity (A. W.) : Etherege's plays (1888).
Villemain : Etudes de littérature ancienne et étrangère.
Voltaire : Lettres Anglaises.
Ward (A. W.) : English dramatic literature.
Ward (W. C.) : Edition of Vanbrugh's works.
Wood (Anthony) : Life of Anthony Wood written by himself (Athenæ Oxonienses).

# INTRODUCTION.

(1. General survey of Molière's influence upon the literatures of Europe. 2. The deep impression made by Molière upon the minds of the English, as manifested in the Preface to "Select Comedies of Molière" (1732). 3. The Abbé Prévost's description of the popularity of Molière in England. 4. Dramatic criticisms of Frenchmen who were in England during the years following the Restoration. 5. Prevailing love for the theatres. 6. General influence, other than that of the drama, of France upon England at the time of the Restoration).

1. Francisque Sarcey has rightly said with reference to Molière: [1] "Il est un point de son histoire que nous ignorons presque, ou du moins dont nous ne parlons jamais: c'est son rayonnement glorieux sur l'Europe lettrée." It was in England that the works of the great comic dramatist were first welcomed; as early as 1670, during Molière's lifetime, they were being utilised for the entertainment of the English aristocracy. Moland writes: "Les auteurs comiques de la Grande-Bretagne essaient d'imiter les pièces du poète français. Ils commencent par les transformer en grosses farces très épicées, très cyniques, comme l'exigeait le goût d'un public encore grossier. Mais peu à peu ils en arrivent à des imitations plus tolérables, et c'est à l'inspiration de Molière qu'ils doivent ce qu'ils produisent de plus remarquable dans la comédie, sans en excepter le chef d'œuvre de Sheridan: 'The School for Sandal.' L'édition de Molière publiée à Londres en 1732 est une des premières éditions de luxe du grand écrivain. Chacun de ses chefs d'œuvre était dédié à quelque grand seigneur anglais." There was formed at London during the reigns of Charles II. and James II. a whole school of dramatists whose minds were deeply impressed by the marvellous productions of Molière. It is known that the great dramatist was very much neglected at Paris about the year 1750; the English, on the contrary, reproached their neighbours with this neglect, and Fielding adapted some of the French masterpieces to suit the prevailing taste of his countrymen.

(1) Sarcey: "Influence de Molière sur le monde civilisé." (Vol. II. of "Quarante Ans de Théâtre"). To Sarcey we are indebted for the greater portion of this account of Molière's influence upon the various European literatures. We have also consulted the Preface to Moland's "Molière, sa vie et ses ouvrages."

It is impossible to read the dramatic work of Sheridan without continually finding reminiscences of Molière. "The School for Scandal" is replete with traits borrowed from the master, and if we were to deduct what has been taken from "L'Ecole des Femmes," "Le Misanthrope," and "Tartuffe," there would be but little else remaining. The first information which we have of an acquaintance with Molière in Germany is that in 1680, the elector of Saxony, who resided at Torgau, had seven or eight of the French dramatist's masterpieces performed. Thus, seven years after Molière's death, his influence had reached the other side of the Rhine, a fact which is not a little surprising when we take into account the slowness of communications at that period. Molière's name holds a prominent position in the minds of the Germans during the whole of the following century. Under the direction of the celebrated Gottsched, a school of writers had been formed at Leipzig, the object of whom was to present a dramatic literature to their country by means of a clever imitation of the French comic drama. Molière was their model, and those of them who understood him tried now to reproduce his comedies, now to imitate his style. In this group appears the name of Lessing, who was then quite young and not fully in possession of his own originality. Gottsched gave to his young collaborators a stage on which to produce their works, and provided them with actors to represent them. On this stage the majority of Molière's comedies were performed, having been either translated or rehandled. Madame Gottsched translated "Le Misanthrope," Krueger adapted "Tartuffe," Lessing composed his earlier comedies in accordance with the method of Molière, many of whose characters he borrowed, and Elias Schlegel took from him numerous ideas for his plays. However, the influence of Molière is not confined to this school at Leipsig. From Hamburg to Vienna he has supplied a vast number of translators, adapters, and imitators with an inexhaustible mine of works which were read with delight throughout Germany. [1] "Sur tous les théâtres importants il est joué par les grands acteurs. C'est Eckhof, c'est Iffland, qui se disputent à l'envi ses principaux rôles. C'est à ses pièces qu'ont recours tous les directeurs de théâtre dans l'embarras. On le jouait presque dans les écoles sous le masque d'une honnête latinité, et Goethe lui-même qui, de son propre aveu, s'était fait à dix-huit ans l'imitateur encore bien inexpérimenté de Molière, jouera un peu plus tard, devant la petite cour de Weimar, le rôle de Lucas dans 'Le Médecin Malgré Lui.' In Italy Molière's influence made itself felt as early as in Germany. The first

(1) Sarcey: "Influence de Molière sur le monde civilisé."

Italian translation is dated 1698; that of Gozzi, which appeared about the middle of the eighteenth century, was destined to popularise the French dramatist's works in the Peninsula. "L'Avare" and "Les Précieuses Ridicules" passed into the various Italian dialects and patois. "Tartuffe," reduced to three acts by an unknown imitator, "Il don Pilona," proved the delight of Italian society. The first comic poet of Italy, Goldoni, is a disciple of Molière. Goldoni's plays have not ceased for a whole century to provide Italy with the entertainment of good comedy, and, at the present time, the Italian comic drama is only an indirect and prolonged echo of Molière's genius. Time was necessary for the French dramatist to pass the Pyrenees. It was only towards the middle of the eighteenth century that "Tartuffe," translated into Portuguese by Captain Manœl de Sonza, was acted at Lisbon, and met with an enthusiastic reception. In Spain, we have to refer to the year 1760 to see "Le Misanthrope" and "L'Avare" inspire the poets and the critics with the idea of regenerating the national comedy on these models. Moratin was the man who applied himself to this task with the greatest assiduity. He had come to Paris during his youth, and became intimately acquainted with Goldoni. It was in conjunction with him that he had thought out his extensive projects of literary reform; he returned to Spain, and issued a sort of manifesto wherein he declared how essential it was for the writers of Spanish comedy to take Molière as their model. He translated the works of the French dramatist and caused them to be represented at Madrid, where they were eminently successful. Moratin died at Paris, and was buried not far from him whose disciple he had been. Not only is this influence of Molière greatly in evidence among the more important peoples, but it can be traced in the less celebrated literatures of the smaller nations. To sum up, the comedy of Molière, in less than eighty years, became disseminated over the whole of Europe, and may be said, in general, to have imparted new life to this branch of the drama. During the nineteenth century his influence has decreased, but to make up for this, his renown has certainly increased.

2. It is with one phase of this influence that we propose to deal in this essay, namely, the influence exerted by Molière, together with his contemporaries and immediate followers, upon the English comic dramatists of the Restoration, the most important, as it is assuredly the most interesting, of the subjects concerned in the relations between the two literatures at that time. The period selected embraces that school of comedy, the savoury and

cynical flavour of which Voltaire so much enjoyed [1] He revelled in the painting, somewhat coarse, though faithful even to impudence, of the current events of that period of our history. "Ce théâtre," says Voltaire, "n'est pas le théâtre de toutes les vertus ; mais il faut avouer que c'est l'école de l'esprit et du bon comique." Before commencing our survey of the special period chosen, which extends from 1660 until 1714, we have deemed it advisable to quote two passages from the Preface of the English translation, entitled "Select Comedies of Molière" (1732), in order to show both the admiration in which the French dramatist was held, and the vast superiority of his works over the productions of the English writers of that day ; the remarks of the translators, who reveal a thorough acquaintance with Molière's genius, may be applied equally well to the writers whose work belongs to the period with which this essay will deal. Molière's excellence in the dramatic art is extolled in the following terms : [2] "The unities of action, place, and time are religiously observed. With regard to the first, the chief business of every play is always single, and the affairs of one person taken particular notice of, above all the rest. The lesser intrigues and under-plots bear always some relation to the grand one, and every person of the drama is continually promoting the design of the whole, at the same time that they are carrying on their special private ones. He contrives everything so regularly that there is no huddle or confusion in the action ; all is worked on gradually by probable instruments, and a due preparation and introduction of incidents, and while all the scenes are connected and necessary to the whole, every single one is so laboured and finished, has such a regular beginning, middle, and end, that it is a kind of whole in itself. He is very careful in preserving a continuity in his action, and never suffers the stage to be empty but at the end of an act ; while in order to the true coherence of all the parts, he never fails to shew sufficient cause of the entrance and exit of every person, for what purpose they come on the stage, and to what end they go off, a rule of the utmost importance, though frequently neglected ; and as there is nothing more elegant than the structure of a dramatic poem, neither is anything more difficult. As for the other two unities, of place and time, he is generally very exact in them ; he has no shifting of scenes, nor skipping of days ; where the action begins it always ends, and the time of the fable is that of the representation." In reference to the contemporary

(1) Voltaire: "Lettres Anglaises."

(2) Preface to the English translation entitled "Select Comedies of Molière" (1732).

English authors, the translators have written the following criticism : [1] " These English writers may learn from Molière to understand what is meant by a whole and its parts ; that to have four or five independent plots in one play is quite unnecessary, one being sufficient ; as likewise not to put the players to an unreasonable expense by obliging them to make new clothes for double the number of characters that are wanted to carry on the design, and provide new scenes for a dozen different changes in one performance, when a single dining-room would have done as well. But, lastly, he will force them, perhaps, to acknowledge that a play without a moral, without the imitation of justice, and instruction to life, is a mercenary and scandalous undertaking."

3. Shortly after the appearance of this English translation of Molière's masterpieces, the Abbé Prévost, who, an exile from France, visited England [2] (of which country he was a great admirer), started, in 1735, a kind of literary gazette, entitled " Le Pour et Contre." It contains an interesting passage with the heading : " Estime des Anglais pour Molière." [3] Prévost, speaking of the immense popularity of Molière with the English, has written : " Je ne parlerai aujourd'hui que de Molière. La France même qui se glorifie avec raison d'avoir produit ce grand homme, n'a rien fait de si éclatant en sa faveur. Non-seulement toutes ses pièces viennent d'être imprimées à Londres avec des préfaces honorables, avec des notes, et la traduction anglaise placée à côté du français ; mais comme si c'était trop peu d'un seul nom, quelque illustre qu'il puisse être, pour servir de frontispice à tout l'ouvrage, on a multiplié les dédicaces au même nombre que les pièces; de sorte que le Prince de Galles et les principaux seigneurs de l'Angleterre se trouvent intéressés à la gloire de Molière. Le succès de cette belle édition prouve qu'il n'a pas moins de partisans dans les rangs inférieurs."

4. It will be interesting, in this introductory chapter, to make inquiry into the dramatic criticisms of two of the more important Frenchmen who, through exile or other cause, were in England during the period with which this essay deals. Saint Evremond (1613-1703) spent the last forty years of his life in exile in London, thus coming into direct contact with a literature which was then almost unknown in France. M. Texte has written the following description concerning this man and his residence in

(1) Preface to the English translation entitled " Select Comedies of Molière " (1732).

(2) Prévost: " Mémoires d'un Homme de Qualité."

(3) Vol. I.: " Le Pour et Contre "— Nombre IV.

London : [1] " Condamné à vivre à Londres, l'ami de Waller, de Buckingham, de d'Aubigny, s'il n'a jamais su l'anglais, s'est du moins fait une idée assez exacte du génie de nos voisins. Il a démêlé finement le fort et le faible du drame anglais. A la vérité, il ne nomme pas Shakespeare, ou du moins il n'y fait qu'une allusion rapide et vague. [2] Mais il nomme Ben Jonson, dont il avait lu, ou vu jouer ' Catalina,' ' Séjan,' plusieurs comédies. L'année même de ' Phèdre,' il a parlé en bons termes de ce théâtre qui ' donne trop aux sens,' mais qui renferme des beautés neuves et fortes, dont notre tragédie est incapable. Surtout—et sans que son information fût toujours très précise—il s'est élargi l'esprit au contact d'une littérature nouvelle et très différente de la nôtre." It is interesting, moreover, to study his opinions concerning the English comedy of the time. [4] He observes that there is no comedy more conformable to that of the ancients in what relates to the manners. " It is not," says he, " a mere piece of gallantry, full of intrigues and amorous discourses as in Spain and France ; it is the representation of the ordinary way of living, according to the various humours and different characters of men." He states that, in the opinion of the French, " these characters are strained too far, as those that are to be seen upon the French stage are a little too faint to the relish of the English," and shows that the reason of it is that the English dive too deeply into a subject, and the French commonly not far enough. " The truth is," adds he, " I never saw men of better understanding than either the French, who consider things with attention, or the English, that can disengage themselves from their too deep meditations, and return to that facility of discourse and freedom of wit, of which, if possible, a man should always be master. The finest gentlemen in the world are the French that think and the English that speak." Saint-Evremond afterwards proceeds to the difference which is to be found between the English and the French comedies, and points out that the first are as agreeable and entertaining, though not so regular and exact, as the latter. A reference to Molière, whom Saint-Evremond compares with Ben Jonson, is worthy of notice : " Our Molière whom the ancients have inspired with the true spirit of comedy, equals their Ben Jonson in representing truly the various humours and different ways of men, both observing in their characters a due regard to the peculiar

(1) J. Texte: " Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les origines du cosmopolitisme littéraire " (1895).

(2) Lettre à Madame de Mazarin (1682).

(3) Saint-Evremond: Sur les tragédies (1677).

(4) Saint-Evremond: Sur la comédie anglaise (Translated into English by Des Maizeaux).

taste and genius of their own nation. I believe they have both carried that point as far as the ancients ever did; but it is not to be denied but that they had a greater regard to their characters than to the plot which might have been better laid together and more naturally unravelled."

We have some useful information with regard to theatrical matters in the account [1] which Misson wrote in 1697. He states that there are two theatres in London, the one large and handsome, where they sometimes act operas and sometimes plays, the other somewhat smaller and only for plays. "Le parterre à Londres est en amphithéâtre et rempli de bancs sans dossiers, garnis et couverts d'une étoffe verte. Les hommes de qualité, particulièrement les jeunes gens, quelques dames sages et honnêtes, et beaucoup de filles qui cherchent fortune, s'asseyent là pêle-mêle, causent, jouent, badinent, écoutent, n'écoutent pas. Plus loin, contre le mur, et vis-à-vis de la scène, s'élève un autre amphithéâtre qui est occupé par les personnes de la plus haute qualité, entre lesquelles il y a peu d'hommes. Les galeries, dont il y a seulement un double rang, ne sont remplies que de gens du commun, particulièrement celle du haut." He further declares that there is a violent conflict between the French and the English about the composition of plays; for in England, he says, they laugh at the unity of time, place, and action, and at all the laws of Aristotle's stage. Misson has also given his own impression of the exquisites [2] who were to be seen in the pit. He asserts that England has a competent share of these animals, and that the city of London is thoroughly well stocked with them. The play-houses, the chocolate-houses, and park in spring perfectly swarm with them; their whole business is to hunt after new fashions. The writer adds that they are creatures compounded of a periwig and a coat laden with powder as white as a miller's, a face besmeared with snuff, and a few affected airs; they are exactly like Molière's marquises, and want nothing but that title, which they would infallibly assume in any other country but England. His description of Charles II.[3] whom he terms a good prince, is deserving of notice. He declares him to be a man of wit, curious in physical and mechanical experiments, a pensioner of France, a Roman Catholic if anything; sick of being tossed from pillar to post, he was resolved to spend the better part of

(1) "Mémoires et observations faites par un voyageur en Angleterre." This work was translated into English in 1719, by John Ozell. The date usually given for Misson's work is 1698, but he was evidently writing it in 1697, for on page 213 of Ozell's translation we read: "At this time (August, 1697) there are 19 dukes, etc.". . .

(2) Misson: "Mémoires" (under the heading: Beaux).

(3) Misson: "Mémoires" (under the heading: Charles II.).

his life in peace—fonder of women, ease, and pleasure than Dunkirk, England, and all the crowns in the universe. To sum up, on the question of the theatres all the French travellers agree[1]; they are struck by the beauty of the buildings, and the luxury of the costumes. On the other hand, they express no little astonishment at the incoherence, the licentiousness, and the coarse brutality of the plays which they witness.

5. Genest (Vol. 1, P. 425) has pointed out that Charles II. himself was a good friend to the theatres. Quoting Cibber), the writer states that both the theatres (i.e., Dorset Gardens and the Theatre Royal) were so much the delight and concern of the Court that their particular differences, pretensions, or complaints were generally ended by the king's or duke's personal decision or command. Furthermore, the king is said to have suggested subjects and furnished hints to several dramatic writers. Genest adds that Langbaine speaks in high praise of Charles II.'s judgment in theatricals, and the author maintains that, so far as the department of comedy is concerned, he feels no inclination to refute this statement. Moreover, with regard to the prevailing love for the theatres, we have the testimony of Samuel Pepys who, notwithstanding the arduous duties of his daily life, was a real enthusiast in matters relating to the stage. So devoted was he to this method of entertainment that we find him frequenting the theatre at the risk of his own reputation,[2] and sometimes at the expense of personal discomfort.[3] The following two quotations from his diary will serve to illustrate the popularity of the theatres; they also contain some useful information concerning the prices which were paid for admission: (a) October 19th, 1667: "Though we came by two o'clock, there was no room in the pit, but were forced to go into one of the upper boxes, at 4/- apiece, which is the first time I ever sat in a box in my life . . . . the house infinite full and the King and Duke of York there." (b) January 1st, 1668: "At the Duke of York's playhouse a mighty company of citizens, prentices, and others; and it makes me observe that when I began first to bestow a play on myself, I do not remember that I saw so many by half of the ordinary prentices and mean people in the pit at 2/6 apiece as now; I going for several years no higher than the 12d. and then the 18d. places, though I strained hard to go

(1) Sorbière: "Relation d'un Voyage en Angleterre" (1664). Chappuzeau: "L'Europe Vivante" (1667).

(2) Entry in Diary, December 7th, 1666: "I was in mighty pain lest I should be seen by anybody to be at a play."

(3) Entry in Diary, December 28th, 1666: "Sat with a wind coming into my back and neck, which did much trouble me."

in then when I did ; so much the vanity and the prodigality of the age is to be observed in this particular." The Frenchmen in England during these years make reference in their writings to this enthusiastic love among the English for the theatres to which the latter resorted in great numbers ; in illustration of this we quote Sorbière and Chappuzeau. The former, in his " Relation d'un voyage en Angleterre " (1664), says : " Les meilleures places sont celles du parterre où les hommes et les femmes sont assis pêle-mêle, chacun avec ceux de sa bande." Chappuzeau's allusion to the concourse of people who visited the theatres is as follows : " On joue tous les jours, il y a toujours foule dans les trois théâtres et cent carrosses en barricadent les avenues." (1)

6. (2) Lastly, some account of the relations, other than those appertaining to the drama, between France and England at the period of the Restoration, is necessary. The outward appearance of the court of Charles II., after it had returned to England, was in all respects French. During the civil war, numerous literary men and poets were obliged to take refuge in France. Denham, being intrusted with the letters in cipher which Cowley wrote to the king, was untimately detected, and made his escape to Paris, where he was for a time in attendance on Henrietta-Maria. In April, 1648, he is said to have (3) " conveyed or stolen away the two Dukes of Yorke and Gloucester from St. James's (from the tuition of the Earle of Northumberland), and conveyed them into France, to the Prince of Wales and Queen-Mother." Waller (4) likewise spent some years in France, and was there held in high esteem. Cowley followed the Queen at the time of her flight to Paris, and made himself very useful to the Royalist cause by various missions, and by carrying on the secret correspondence between the Queen and Charles. On Cromwell's death, Cowley went a second time to Paris, but returned to England at the Restoration. Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon, was, upon the impeachment of Strafford, by Archbishop Usher's advice, sent to the learned Samuel Bochart at Caen ; he subsequently made the tour of France and Germany. Soon after the Restoration, he returned to England, and was favourably received at the court of Charles II. Lovelace left England in 1646, raised a regiment for

(1) Chappuzeau: " L'Europe Vivante " (1667).

(2) For this section, Taine's " Histoire de la littérature anglaise " (book III.); Mr. G. M. Trevelyan's " England under the Stuarts "; and the " Dictionary of National Biography " have been consulted.

(3) Aubrey: " Brief Lives, 1669—1696."

(4) Aubrey says: " After he had obtained his pardon of the Parliament, he went to France where he stayed . . . . yeares, and was there very kindly received and esteemed." (" Brief Lives ").

the service of the French king, who was at that time engaged in war with Spain, became colonel of the regiment, and was wounded at Dunkirk when that town was captured by Condé in October, 1646. When the Long Parliament impeached Strafford, the learned Hobbs went over to Paris and remained there for eleven years. He became acquainted with Sorbière, which acquaintance occasioned the Frenchman's journey to London. William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, set out for Paris in February, 1645, arrived there in April, and stayed for three years. Soon after his arrival he married Margaret Lucas, who had accompanied Henrietta-Maria to Paris. John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, on leaving the University of Oxford in 1661, travelled in France and Italy, under the care of Dr. Balfour, who encouraged his taste for literature. He returned to England in 1664. William Wycherley, when about fifteen years of age, was sent by his father (who thereby intended to protect his son from the contamination of Puritanical doctrines) to the west of France [1] (Saintonge or the Angoumois). There, living on the banks of the Charente, he became acquainted with the most accomplished ladies of the French court, and especially with Madame de Montausier, formerly Mlle. de Rambouillet. Furthermore, the French and English courts had similar interests and similar ideas with regard to religion and monarchical government. Charles II. himself, the son and companion in exile of Henrietta-Maria, was to all intents and purposes a Frenchman ; it was in France that he was educated, and in France that his interests were centred. Despotism and Catholicism were pre-eminent in France, and these two factors Charles regarded as the essentials and ideals for true government, while the society and the court of Versailles were looked upon by him as unsurpassable models. This opinion was enhanced by the fact that the petty rulers of Germany and Italy, with one accord adored the standard of excellence which the " Roi Soleil " displayed before the whole of Europe. As is to be expected, the reinstated courtiers imported a mania for foreign models, principally French ; the grand classic literature of seventeenth century France led the fashion with the writers in England. Not only was attention given to Molière, but also to Bossuet, the most powerful of pulpit-orators, and the possessor of the most strength and acumen as a controversialist ; the great Corneille was translated, and the heroic romances of the Scudéry school furnished a storehouse of ideas for plots to our dramatists.

(1) Villemain: " Etudes de Littérature, Ancienne et Etrangère." (Pp. 307, 308)

We shall see, in the course of the present dissertation, that in some instances plays and plots have been taken in their entirety from French originals, while not a few of the English pieces which owe nothing to Molièresque comedy for the plot itself, will yet be found to be interspersed with numerous borrowings, either from the work of Molière himself or from that of his contemporaries and followers.

## CHAPTER I.

Influence of the French comic drama upon the first generation of dramatists, who shared with Dryden in the foundation of a classic or regular drama in England. (Davenant, Dryden, Etherege, Shadwell, Sedley).

Sir William Davenant (1606-1668) may be regarded as the pioneer of the school of dramatists whose comedies were influenced by Molière and his contemporaries. Before actually discussing that part of his work which reveals an acquaintance with Molière, it will be interesting to find out what connexion he had with France. In the Prefatory Memoir of Maidment and Logan (Vol. I.—Dramatists of the Restoration), we find that in May, 1641, being involved in a royalist conspiracy, he made an unsuccessful attempt to leave the country for France; a second effort likewise proved futile, but on the third occasion he effected his escape and joined the Queen, Henrietta-Maria of France. The above-mentioned account of his life informs us that "Davenant remained some time abroad. More deeply than ever attached to the Royal cause, he ventured to return once more to England entrusted by the Queen with a quantity of military stores for the Earl of Newcastle." It appears that in 1644, after the fatal battle of Marston Moor, Sir William again betook himself to France, where he met with a good reception at the hands of the Queen. In the summer of 1646, he was sent to England on a private mission from the queen to the king, but returned to Paris soon afterwards, on this occasion being the guest of his friend Lord Jermyn, who had apartments in the Louvre. Early in 1650, when engaged on another royal mission, he was captured and imprisoned in Cowes Castle. His constant intercourse with the French must have made him quite familiar with the language, and moreover, his admiration of the French stage is clearly demonstrated by the fact that his play "The Man's the Master" (acted in 1668, printed in 1669), both in subject-matter and in style is borrowed from two pieces of Scarron (1610-1660), namely [1] "Jodelet, ou le Maistre Valet," and "L'Héritier Ridicule." Pepys saw "The Man's the Master" acted; the entry in his "Diary" is dated 26th March, 1668: "To the Duke of York's house to see the new play, called "The Man is the Master," where the house was. it not being one o'clock, very full . . . . The play is a translation out of French, and the plot Spanish, but not anything extraordinary at all in it, though translated

(1) Borrowed by Scarron from the "Amo Criado" of Francisco de Rojas, [Cp. P. 443 of Adolphe de Pubusque's "Histoire comparée des littératures espagnole et française" (1842)].

by Sir W. Davenant, and so I found the King and his company did think meanly of it, though there was here and there something pretty; but the most of the mirth was sorry, poor stuffe, of eating of sack posset and slabbering themselves, and mirth fit for clownes; the prologue but poor, and the epilogue little in it but the extraordinariness of it, it being sung by Harris and another in the form of a ballad." A further brief appreciation is dated 5th May, 1668: " . . . . saw "The Man's the Master," which proves, upon my seeing it again, a very good play."

But the point of importance in connexion with Davenant is that he must have got possession of an early edition of Molière's piece " Sganarelle, ou le Cocu Imaginaire." The first edition of this play, published by Jean Ribou, is dated August 12th, 1660, while a second appeared in 1662. It was in 1663 that Davenant is said to have had acted his comic entertainment styled " The Playhouse to be Let." The second act of this medley is clearly modelled on " Le Cocu Imaginaire "; it is spoken in broken English by actors supposed to be Frenchmen. It is hardly correct to call it a translation, as a great part of the speeches of Sganarelle and Gorgibus and the other characters, has been abridged. The names of the personages are the same in both pieces, and the incidents which keep cropping up are faithfully reproduced by the English dramatist. Perhaps those portions of " Le Cocu Imaginaire " wherein Molière has pandered to the tastes of the vulgar, are yet more conspicuously vulgar in Davenant's version. As an illustration of the close way in which Davenant has imitated Molière, the following few lines from Gorgibus' paternal speech of advice to his daughter Célie, have been chosen :

(a) " Lisez-moi, comme il faut, au lieu de ces sornettes,
Les Quatrains de Pibrac, et les doctes tablettes
Du conseiller Matthieu, ouvrage de valeur,
Et plein de beaux dictons à réciter par cœur,
Le Guide des Pécheurs est encore un bon livre."
(Molière).

(b) " . . . rede de Stanzas of Pibrac
Ende de Tablets of de Consilier Matieu
Viche vill teach you to follow mi direction.
Am I not Gorgibus your vader ? "
(Davenant).

One very important result of Sir William Davenant's knowledge of the French stage was the removal of that very potent prejudice which had long prevailed against women appearing on the stage. He, in 1662-3, obtained the insertion of this clause in the patent granted to him : " That, whereas the women's parts in plays have hitherto been acted

by men in the habits of women at which some have taken offence, we permit and give leave for the time to come, that all women's parts be acted by women." It was Thomas Jordan, an actor, who, in a prologue to the tragedy of "The Moor of Venice" had written:

> "'Tis possible a virtuous woman may
> Abhor all sorts of looseness and yet play;
> Play on the stage where all eyes are upon her.
> Shall we count that a crime, France counts an honour?"

There is yet another very important result of the influence exerted by the French stage upon Davenant, namely, the improvement which he introduced in the matter of stage decoration. It had previously been a characteristic of the English stage that it adhered to simplicity, but Davenant was the cause of this simplicity being changed to the tinsel of decoration and magnificent scenery. Subsequently, Betterton, the famous actor, improved upon Davenant's ideas of scenery and decorations, having been ordered by Charles II. to go to Paris to make a thorough study of the embellishments of the French stage. Consequently, a new theatre which had been founded by Davenant in Dorset Gardens, Salisbury Court, but the completion of which he did not live to see, was very much patronized because of its fine building and grand decorations, which are stated, on good authority, to have cost £5,000.

Between Davenant and Dryden, it is noteworthy that the Duke of Newcastle translated "L'Etourdi" of Molière into English, a point of importance because it was utilised by Dryden, as will be seen shortly, for his comedy "Sir Martin Mar-all."

We will now proceed to an examination of the comedies of Dryden (1631-1699) in so far as they were influenced by contemporary French comedy. In the first place, it is necessary to point out that he had far greater admiration for French tragedy than for French comedy. The excellence of French comedy does not seem to have made a deep impression upon him, and he shows much more respect for Corneille than for Molière.

Dryden informs us in the Prologue to his vulgar comedy "The Wild Gallant" (acted February, 1663, but not printed until 1669) that he endangered himself with a Spanish plot. Langbaine affirms that the plot of this play is not original, but "he has so beautified it that I will allow him to be called the author of the 'Wild Gallant.'" The Spanish original is unknown, but various facts, such as the forms of the names of the characters Isabelle and Lady Du Lake, lead us to suspect that Dryden at any rate became acquainted

with the plot through the medium of a French version. This would not be the only instance of his having adopted such a plan; for example, the play "An Evening's Love" was avowedly from Thomas Corneille's "Le Feint Astrologue," which, in its turn, owed its origin to Calderon. It is noteworthy how Dryden was all the while closely watching contemporary French drama, as is illustrated by a remark in his preface to the "Wild Gallant"; he is contrasting his own frankness with Thomas Corneille's vanity: "Thomas Corneille is more resolute in his preface before his Pertharite, which was condemned more universally than this; for he avows boldly that, in spite of censure, his play was well and regularly written; which is more than I dare say for mine." The English dramatist is referring to the following statements from the "Examen de Pertharite": "Le succès de cette tragédie a été si malheureux, que pour m'épargner le chagrin de m'en souvenir, je n'en dirai presque rien. J'ajoute ici malgré sa disgrâce, que les sentiments en sont assez vifs et nobles, les vers assez bien tournés, et que la façon dont le sujet s'explique dans la première scène ne manque pas d'artifice." An entry in Pepys' "Diary" is worthy of notice here: 23rd February, 1663: "We took coach, and to Court, and there saw 'The Wilde Gallant' performed by the King's house, but it was ill acted, and the play so poor a thing as I never saw in my life almost, and so little answering the name that, from the beginning to the end, I could not, nor can at this term, tell certainly which was the Wild Gallant. The King did not seem pleased at all, the whole play, nor anybody else."

We are told by Sir Walter Scott in his introduction to "Sir Martin Mar-all" that it is imitated from the French of Molière, that William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, amongst other lucubrations, translated Molière's "L'Etourdi," and presented it to Dryden by whom it was adapted for the stage. He informs us, moreover, that owing to the Duke being far more eminent as a soldier than as an author, what is diverting in the piece has been added by Dryden. So popular did this adaptation from the French prove that it ran for no less than thirty-three nights, and was four times acted at Court, the success being mainly attributed to Nokes (who has been most highly praised by Cibber) in the character of Sir Martin. Scott does not make enough of Dryden's indebtedness to Quinault's "L'Amant Indiscret." He merely says: "L'Amant Indiscret" of Quinault, another French play, has also been consulted by Dryden in furbishing forth the Duke of Newcastle's labours." It will be seen that the influence of Quinault's work was very strong indeed, and that Dryden did more than merely consult it.

In the year 1667 Dryden's comedy was acted, and was printed in the following year. It was thus produced in London simultaneously with Molière's " Tartuffe " in Paris. It will be shown that Dryden utilised the " Amant Indiscret, ou le Maître Etourdi," of Quinault (represented in 1654) quite as much as, if not more than Molière's earliest comedy " L'Etourdi " (first acted in 1653), for his own comedy. " L'Etourdi " is written in fine dramatic couplets ; Dryden, partly in imitation, tried to mix blank verse with prose at a time when we had lost the capacity for writing blank verse, an art which Marlowe had developed, and which Shakespeare had brought to perfection, although in this same year 1667, English blank verse was restored to its former dignity by the appearance of Milton's " Paradise Lost." Scott observes that, with the necessary allowances, " The French play (i.e., L'Etourdi), has been followed in the English with considerable exactness." This, as will be proved, is an erroneous statement; the course of events described in Quinault's comedy has very much to do with that followed by Dryden. Practically none of Dryden's comedy is original; even the greater part of those interwoven scenes of " The Feigned Innocence " owe their origin to Molière. The ease of the dialogue and the humour of the leading character are the chief merits of the English adaptation. Dryden's rendering of the title (Sir Martin Mar-all) is an excellent translation of the French word " étourdi," a blunderer who always fails to do the right thing at the right time. Let us follow Sir Martin's blunders throughout and study their origin. In Act I. Sir Martin accidentally meets his friend Sir John Swallow ; the former, in spite of his possessing such " a fruitful noddle " as he terms it, has not sufficient common sense to keep his own counsel, but informs his friend forthwith, that he is deeply in love ; subsequently it becomes clear that both men have their affections centred on the same object. All this is done by the blunderer notwithstanding the repeated whispers and hints of the smart valet, Warner. The whole of this idea is taken from " L'Amant Indiscret " (Act I.) where Cléandre reveals everything to his friend Lisipe in spite of the repeated warnings of the valet de chambre, Philipin. The following passage has been chosen as an example of the imitation by the English dramatist :

(a) Lisipe : Est-elle de Paris?
Philipin : (à part) : Ah !
Cleandre : Non, elle est d'Auxerre.
Philipin : (à part) : C'est son rival.

Lisipe : C'est là que j'ai certaine terre :
M'apprendrez-vous comment se forma cette amour?
(Quinault).

(b) Sir John : Is she of town or country?
Warner (aside) : How's this?
Sir Martin : She is of Kent, near Canterbury.
Warner (aside) : What does he mean? This is his rival.
Sir John : Near Canterbury, say you? I have a small estate lies thereabouts, and more concernments than one besides. (Dryden).

Mar-all's next serious mistake (Act II.) is where Warner's plot to remove Sir John Swallow out of the way by a lying tale is rendered useless by Mar-all's ill-timed interruption. We will compare the following two passages as illustrative of Dryden's indebtedness to Quinault for this situation :

(a) Lisipe : Donnez donc, dépêchez.
Carpalin : Vous l'aurez à l'instant. Elle n'est point ici.
Lisipe : Je meurs d'impatience.
Cherchez dans l'autre poche avecque diligence.
Carpalin : Oui, nous la trouverons, monsieur, assurément.
Je crois que je la tiens.
Lisipe : Voyez donc promptement.
Carpalin : Je ne lis pas fort bien les lettres si mal faites. Il faut que pour cela je prenne mes lunettes.
Lisipe : C'est trop perdre de temps, donnez-moi ce papier (Il lit) 'A Monsieur Paul Grimau apprentif Savetier.'
Carpalin : Ce n'est donc pas pour vous, c'est pour le fils du frère,
Du neveu du cousin de défunt mon compère. (Quinault).

(b) Sir John : Give me your letter quickly.
Landlord : Nay, soft and fair goes far. Hold, you, hold you.
It is not in this pocket.
Sir John : Search in the other then; I stand on thorns.
Landlord : I think I feel it now; this should be who?
Sir John : Pluck it out then.

Landlord : I'll pluck out my spectacles, and see first. (Reads) To Mr. Paul Grimauld— —apprentice to—No, that's not for you, Sir —that's for the son of the brother of the nephew of the cousin of my gossip Dobson. (Dryden).

The third blunder, the unsuccessful attempt of Warner to enable his master to lead off Millicent, caused by Sir Martin's inconvenient lapsus linguæ, is also based on a scene in Quinault's comedy. Mr. Moody plays the same part in Dryden as Lidame in Quinault. The next device to remove Sir John out of the way is contrived by the two servants, Warner and Rosette. They manage to secure the most important document relating to the jointure in which Sir John Swallow is concerned. Rosette pretends that she has accidentally left it at Canterbury ; Sir John, accordingly, is for setting out immediately, but Mar-all again proves himself a fool by revealing the plot. This situation owes its origin to Quinault. Let us compare the following parallel passages :

(a) Lisipe : Non, je pars seulement pour servir votre mère.
Je retourne chez elle, et vais prendre avec soin.
Des papiers oubliés, dont elle a grand besoin.
Adieu fidèle ami ! vois souvent ma maîtresse.
Parle-lui quelquefois du cœur que je lui laisse.
Et vous, chère beauté, dans mon éloignement,
Souffrez en ma faveur l'ami de votre amant.
(Quinault).

(b) Sir John : (to Millicent) :
It must be so, I must take post immediately.
Madam, for some days I must be absent ;
(to Sir Martin) And to confirm you, friend, how much I trust you,
I leave the dearest pledge I have on earth,
My mistress, to your care.
(Dryden).

For that scene in Act IV. where Warner, in order to serve his master, pretends to have been soundly thrashed by him and thus ingratiates himself into the favour of his master's rival, Dryden was no doubt acquainted with the two scenes, both that in Molière and the similar one in

Quinault. Philip is the craftly valet in Quinault's play, while Mascarille is the hero in Molière's comedy. No sooner has Warner got well into the way of securing Millicent than Mar-all madly sends what he considers to be a cleverly-worded letter which simply upsets all. This is taken from Molière's play where Lélie spoils Mascarille's plot by sending a false letter to Trufaldin. Warner goes so far as to pretend that Millicent is by no means of unblemished reputation, for the sole purpose of removing Sir John out of the way. Mar-all, of course, spoils the plot by his want of tact. All this has been taken from Molière's "L'Etourdi," from that scene in which Célie's moral character is attacked by Mascarille in order to effect his own and his master's ends. The awkward position in which Warner is placed in consequence of his bold assertion is taken from Mascarille's situation in "L'Etourdi." The scene (in Act. V.) where Warner contrives that his master shall appear to his beloved to be an accomplished player on the lute, whereas really he knows nothing whatever about it, is not, as has been commonly supposed, of Dryden's own invention. Langbaine [1] informs us that this situation is taken from a work called "Francion" written by a Monsieur Du Fare (Book VII.) After Warner has finished performing on the lute, and singing, Sir Martin Mar-all, like a fool, continues fumbling, and gazing in adoration on his mistress. This scene contributes much to the comic situation. The scene in Act V. where Sir Martin, backed up by Warner, pretends to be the long-lost bastard son of Moody, is modelled on that scene in "L'Etourdi," where Lélie, dressed like an Armenian, fails in his attempt to win the fair Célie and, by his badly-managed conduct, shows himself up to Trufaldin as an imposter. Lélie, it will be remembered, made a serious mistake in geography, while Sir Martin erred in a similar manner. These are the two passages in question :

(a) Trufaldin : Vous avez vu ce fils où mon espoir se fonde?

Lelie : Oui, Seigneur Trufaldin, le plus gaillard du monde.

Trufaldin : Suffit. Où l'avez-vous laissé?

Mascarille : O cerveau mal habile!

(Molière—"L'Etourdi" IV., ii.).

(b) Sir John : (to Moody) : These are rogues, Sir, I plainly perceive it ; pray, let me ask him one question.

Which way did you come home, Sir?

Sir Martin : We came home by land, Sir.

(1) Langbaine: Account of the English Dramatic Poets.

Warner: That is, from India to Persia, from Persia to Turkey, from Turkey to Germany, from Germany to France?

Sir John: And from thence over the narrow seas on horseback.

Moody: 'Tis so, I discern it now; but some shall smoke for't.
Stay a little Anthony, I will be with you presently.

(Dryden).

That scene in which Mar-all persists in carrying out a plot of his own, in which masks are used, and which results in his marrying a waiting-maid instead of an heiress is of Dryden's invention, and adds considerably to the comic situation.

The feigned innocence of Mrs. Christian, which is claimed by some writers as an original contribution of Dryden is without doubt in reality based on the character of Agnès in the "Ecole des Femmes" (acted in 1662, five years before the production of Dryden's comedy). We are informed by Langbaine [1] that the song of "Blind love to this hour" is translated from a song of Voiture beginning "L'Amour sous sa Loy." There is one great difference which ought to be pointed out, namely, in the conclusion of the plays. Molière's Célie is at length united to her blunderer of a lover. Mrs. Millicent, the parallel character in "Sir Martin Mar-all" becomes the wife of the skilful valet Warner who has been exerting himself so strenuously on behalf of his master. Moreover, Lélie is not nearly so despicable a personage as Sir Martin; the former is thoughtless and inconsequential, rather than conceited and foolish as Mar-all shows himself to be.

Pepys has a good word to say for "Sir Martin Mar-all"; the following is the entry dated August 19th, 1667: "To the Duke of York's house, all alone, and there saw 'Sir Martin Marall' again, though I saw him but two days since, and do find it the most comical play that ever I saw in my life." This comedy was evidently a great favourite with Pepys, for we find that on January 1st, 1668, he was again present at a performance of "Sir Martin Mar-all." "After dinner to the Duke of York's playhouse, and there saw 'Sir Martin Marall'; which I have seen so often, and yet am mightily pleased with it, and think it mighty witty, and the fullest of proper matter for mirth that was ever writ." (Pepys' "Diary"—entry of January 1st, 1668). It is interesting to read a reference to "Sir Martin Mar-all" on

(1) Langbaine: Account of the English Dramatic Poets.

page 28 of Downes' "Roscius Anglicanus," a history of the stage from 1660 to 1706. He says: "Sir Martin Mar-all, the Duke of Newcastle, giving Mr. Dryden a bare translation of it, out of a comedy of the famous French poet Moleiro." Joseph Knight says in his preface to this work: "Dryden's Sir Martin Mar-all is a version of "L'Etourdi of Molière and Warner, otherwise Sir Martin's man, answers to the character of Mascarille in that play, a character so important that in the hands of M. Coquelin aîné it is the most important in a modern revival at the Comédie Française."

Dryden himself owns in his preface that the prose comedy, "An Evening's Love," or "The Mock Astrologer" (acted and printed in 1668), is founded on "Le Feint Astrologue" of Thomas Corneille (1625-1709); this French comedy in its turn, is an imitation of Calderon's "El Astrologo Fingido." But a reader of the English comedy will readily observe that Dryden owes something to Molière. That quarrelling scene (Act IV., Sc. 3), between Wildblood and Jacinta is clearly based on Act IV., Sc. 3 of Molière's "Le Dépit Amoureux," where a double quarrel rages between Lucile, Eraste, Marinette and Gros-René. Just as Marinette and Gros-René follow their master and mistress in their quarrel and reconciliation, so do Beatrix and Maskell in Dryden's comedy. The ridiculous loquacious babbling of Don Alonzo, and his friend's method of silencing him by ringing a bell in his ears is imitated from the scene between Albert and Métaphraste in the same play (Act II., Sc. 9). The character of Aurelia was doubtless suggested by "Les Précieuses Ridicules." Let us compare Act III., Sc. 1, of Dryden's comedy especially where Aurelia says to her waiting woman Camilla:

"No! let me see: give me the counsellor of the graces"

Cam: The counsellor of the graces, Madam?

Aurelia: My glass, I mean. What, will you never be so spiritual as to understand refined language?

with Sc. 6 of "Les Précieuses Ridicules" where Madelon says to her servant Marotte:

"Vite, venez nous tendre ici dedans le conseiller des graces."

Marotte: Par ma foi, je ne sais point quelle bête c'est là; il faut parler chrétien, si vous voulez que je vous entende.

Cathos: Apportez-nous le miroir, ignorante que vous êtes! et gardez-vous bien d'en salir la glace par la communication de votre image.

In making "Le Feint Astrologue" and "El Astrologo Fingido" the basis of his own comedy, Dryden has rejected some of the adventures which are described in the French and Spanish pieces, heightened those which he has chosen, and has added others which were neither in the French nor in the Spanish. It is noteworthy that the dramatist makes no reference to his indebtedness to the "Dépit Amoureux" or to "Les Précieuses Ridicules," although the influence of the two comedies is patent. Moreover, that he could have afforded to be candid in the matter is shown by his statement in the Epilogue:

"He used the French like enemies,
And did not steal their plots but made them prize."

Dryden's extreme vanity is very much in evidence in the preface to "The Mock Astrologer." What he says is "That those who have called Virgil, Terence, and Tasso plagiaries (though they much injured them) had yet a better colour for their accusation. I appeal only to those who are versed in the French tongue and will take the pains to compare this comedy with the French plays above mentioned." Langbaine [1] wittily quotes one of Dryden's own sayings from "Love in a Nunnery" in response to his vanity as displayed by the above quotation:

"A sophisticated truth with an alloy of lie in it."

In the same preface, Dryden also boldly affirms with regard to the charge made against him of stealing part of his plays: "It is true that wherever I have liked any story in a romance, novel, or foreign play, I have made no difficulty, nor ever shall, to take the foundation of it, to build it up, and to make it proper for the English stage. And I will be so vain to say, it has lost nothing in my hands; but it always cost me so much trouble to heighten it for our theatre (which is incomparably more curious in all the ornaments of dramatic poesy than the French or Spanish) that, when I had finished my play, it was like the hulk of Sir Francis Drake, so strangely altered, that there scarcely remained any plank of the timber which first built it."

It is interesting to find that Pepys saw "The Mock Astrologer" acted in 1669. We read the following note in his "Diary"; the entry was made on March 8th, 1669: "With my wife to the King's playhouse, and there saw 'The Mocke Astrologer,' which I have often seen, and but an ordinary play." On referring back, we find that he makes note of one of these occasions under the date of 19th June, 1668: "My wife and Deb have been at the King's playhouse to-day thinking to spy me there; and there saw the new play 'Evening's Love' of Dryden's, which, though

(1) Langbaine: Account of the English Dramatic Poets.

the world commends, she likes not." Evelyn was present at this last-mentioned performance, but he has the title of the play slightly wrong ; here is the entry in his "Diary" : June 19th, 1688 : "To a new play with several of my relations, 'The Evening Lover,' a foolish plot, and very profane ; it afflicted me to see how the stage was degenerated and polluted." Pepys also informs us that Herringham, the printer and publisher in the New Exchange, declares Dryden himself to have described it as a fifth-rate play. (Entry of June 2nd, 1668).

The last play of Dryden which comes within the range of the present subject is his "Amphitryon," which undoubtedly reveals the author's great genius ; it was acted in 1690 and, as he himself owns in his dedication to Sir William Levison Gower, both Plautus and Molière were utilised. Dryden's statement of indebtedness is as follows : "'Tis true, were this comedy wholly mine, I should call it a trifle, and perhaps not think it worth your patronage ; but when the names of Plautus and Molière are joyn'd in it, that is, the two greatest masters of ancient and modern comedy, I must not presume so far on their reputation to think their best and most unquestion'd productions can be termed little. I will not give you the trouble of acquainting you what I have added, or alter'd in either of them, so much it may be for the worse ; but only that the difference of our stage from the Roman and the French did so require it. But I am afraid, for my own interest the world will too easily discover that more than half of it is mine ; and that the rest is rather a lame imitation of their excellencies than a just translation. 'Tis enough, that the reader know by you, that I neither deserve nor desire any applause from it ; if I have perform'd anything, 'tis the genius of my authors that inspired me ; and if it has pleased in representation, let the actors share the praise amongst themselves. As for Plautus and Molière, they are dangerous people, and I am too weak a gamester to put myself into their form of play."

Dryden exaggerates when he says that more than half of it is his own ; quite the bulk of the ideas and situations are to be found in Molière's "Amphitryon" (acted January 2nd, 1668), a three-act comedy in "vers libres," influenced in its turn by Plautus and by Rotrou's "Les Deux Sosies." The characters which Dryden's version contains, and which do not appear in Molière are those of Phoebus and Phaedra. Gripus, Polides, and Tranio are the English representatives of the Theban captains Argatiphontides, Naucrates, Polidas and Posicles. Dryden's own invention supplied him with the intrigue of Mercury with Alcmena's serving-maid Phaedra, and he has added at the end of the fourth act a

song (Mercury's song to Phaedra), "a pastoral dialogue betwixt Thyrsis and Isis," and a rondeau. Dryden's version is in parts excellent, but it is regrettable that, in his endeavour to add comic humour, he did not refrain from adding coarseness. (1) On the whole, it may be said that Dryden's comedy is very little inferior to that of his predecessors who attempted the same subject.

In Genest's "English Stage" (vol. 1, p. 490), we find an excellent criticism of Dryden's "Amphitryon." The author says: "This is a good laughable comedy and deserves to be more frequently acted than it is—the far greater part of it is taken from Plautus and Molière—Molière's "Amphitryon" was acted at Paris in 1668—the character of Cleanthis, Alcmena's woman and Sosia's wife, is a happy edition to the original play—but Molière is inexcusable in not having given her a suitable name—Dryden has made a still greater improvement by representing Phaedra as Alcmena's woman, and Bromia as Sosia's wife—there is no character similar to Eripus in either Plautus or Molière; nearly the whole of the underplot between Mercury, Phaedra, and Gripus is Dryden's—Plautus ends his play seriously—Molière and Dryden with a joke—Molière's prologue opens his play more happily than either Plautus' or Dryden's."

We will now proceed to examine the three pieces of Sir George Etherege (1636 circ.—1694 circ.), Dryden's earliest competitor. Very much light has, within recent years, been thrown upon his life and comedies. On the events of his life it is sufficient to say that all facts, both those substantiated by researches (2) which have been made on the incidents of his career, and those supported by his comedies themselves, go to prove that he was thoroughly versed in the French language and in French men and manners. Each of his three comedies, and especially the last, "The Man of Mode" (1676), shows so intimate an acquaintance with the affairs of Paris that there can be no doubt that he lived in that city for some considerable time. Twelve years intervened between the first representation of "The Comical

(1) On this subject, Sir Walter Scott, in the introduction to Dryden's plays, says: "He is, in general, coarse and vulgar, where Molière is witty; and where the Frenchman ventures upon a double meaning, the Englishman always contrives to make it a single one." Taine ("Histoire de la littérature anglaise") says of the scene between Jupiter and Alcmena that "it is cynical recklessness in place of aristocratic decency; the scene is written after the example of Charles II. and Castlemaine, not of Louis XIV. and Mde de Montespan." He also contrasts Plautus' Roman matron and Molière's honest Frenchwoman with Alcmena, whom he describes as an "expansive female"; he cites in illustration a speech of Alcmena from Act II., Sc. 2, of Dryden's play. It is necessary however, to point out that the "Mémoires" of Saint-Simon do not convince us of the decency of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan.

(2) We refer particularly to Mr. Edmund Gosse's "Seventeenth Century Studies," and Mr. A. W. Verity's edition of Etherege's plays (1888).

Revenge" (acted in 1664), and the appearance of "The Man of Mode" (represented in 1676). A study of the three comedies in the order of their production points to the fact that his last work contains very much more of the spirit of contemporary French society than the two earlier plays reveal, although even in those such references are by no means wanting. Let us take, for instance, Lady Cockwood's words to her husband, Sir Oliver, concerning Courtal's alleged misconduct: "Mr. Courtal intended thee no injury, and told me 'twas only a harmless gallantry, which his French breeding has us'd him to." (She would if she could, Act. V.).

In the last of our author's plays, however, allusions to France and the French, and importations of French words and phrases into the conversation of Sir Fopling Flutter, are numerous. Throughout the first two acts this notorious man of mode makes no appearance, although the audience in eager expectation is continually reminded of his early arrival by remarks made concerning him. This idea on the part of the author of keeping the audience in breathless expectation of the arrival of the principal character in whom the main interest is centred, was very probably taken from Molière, who allows two acts of his masterpiece to be performed before the impostor Tartuffe actually appears in person; it is he who has been the subject of everyone's conversation during the course of the first two acts of this comedy, and also during the first scene of the third act. Such an arrangement showed in the highest degree the French dramatist's originality and dramatic skill. The more we consider the two pieces, the more convinced do we feel that it was Molière who inspired Etherege with the idea of this clever contrivance in order to arouse the minds of his hearers to the highest pitch of interest and excitement. Both Tartuffe and Sir Fopling, when they actually do appear, are not long before they give striking evidence of their respective characteristics. In Act 1 of the English comedy, Medley, Dorimant and Bellair discuss Fopling's merits and accomplishments. We learn that in this man "there is a great critic (in matters of dress) lately arrived piping hot from Paris," also that he affects a certain lisp in imitation of the people of quality in France. French affectation is interspersed in Sir Fopling's conversation when this man of mode presents himself before the audience; this conversation mainly deals with dress, and displays the highest degree of vanity. Here are a few examples:

> "Dorimant, let me embrace thee, without lying. I have not met with any of my acquaintance who retain so much of Paris as thou dost, the very air thou hadst

when the marquis mistook thee i' th' Tuileries, and cry'd, Hey Chevalier, and then begg'd thy pardon."

Further on, too, the following edifying conversation occurs:

"Emilia: He wears nothing but what are originals of the most famous hands in Paris.
Sir Fopling: You are in the right, Madam.
Townley: The suit?
Sir Fopling: Barroy.
Emilia: The Garniture?
Sir Fopling: Le Gras.
Medley: The shoes?
Sir Fopling: Piccar.
Dorimant: The Periwig?
Sir Fopling: Chedreux."

Numerous instances, besides, could be brought forward of speeches freely interwoven with French words and expressions such as "calèche," "grossier," "bien ganté." Even the footmen whom he employs are French, except one who, for being English, is publicly made an object of ridicule by Sir Fopling.

It is interesting to notice that the song in the fifth Act beginning "As Amoris with Philis sat" has been pointed out by Coxeter (ms. note in his copy of Gildon's lives) to be a translation from the French of Madame la Comtesse de la Suze in "Le Recueil des Pièces Galantes." All the old editions prefix to the verses a note: "Song by Sir C. S." These initials stand for Sir Car Scroope, the writer of the Prologue to "The Man of Mode." Another striking proof of Etherege's fluency in the French language is that he here stands out prominently in comparison with the majority of the other dramatists of the Restoration, in that his use of French expressions as illustrated by his works seems quite natural to him, whereas men such as Shadwell produce merely a kind of Gallic affectation.[1]

Turing aside from Etherege's undoubtedly sound knowledge of French and his thorough acquaintance with the manners of France in general, and of Paris in particular, we will proceed to see to what extent he was influenced by Molière who, during the years in which Etherege's two earlier comedies appeared, was being listened to by a larger and more enthusiastic audience than any other author in Europe at that time.

(1) It is deserving of notice that "The Letterbook," acquired by the British Museum in 1837, contains, amongst other interesting details bearing upon Etherege's life, a list of the dramatist's books. In this list appear the names of numerous French translations of the classics.

Nothing can be ascertained concerning Etherege in London before 1664, the year in which "The Comical Revenge" was first acted; he seems to have been unknown there. The probability is that between about 1658 and 1663 he was mainly in Paris, or at any rate in France. Gildon affirms that he spent his early manhood in that country. If this be so, and internal evidence goes to prove that it is so, it is almost certain that he was present at the performance of Molière's three early masterpieces, "L'Etourdi," "Le Dépit Amoureux," and "Les Précieuses Ridicules." The real hero of these three plays is Mascarille, whose brilliant humour no doubt deeply impressed Etherege and culminated in the production of the valet, Dufoy. It is Dufoy in the English piece whose actions interest the hearers more than those of any other character. He is described as a saucy, impertinent Frenchman, servant to Sir Frederick Frollick. The following little speech is typical of his character; it occurs in Act I. :

> "Good mor, good mor to your vorshippé; me am alvay ready to attendé your vorshippé, and your vorshippe's alvay ready to beaté and to abusé me; you vere drunké de lasté nighté, and my head aké to-day morningé."

This character is very trivial compared with Mascarille, who reveals the author's deep insight into human nature. At the same time Dufoy is clearly the creation of one who had acquired an intelligent grasp of Molière's comic genius. Pepys was not very well pleased with the piece; we read the following note in his "Diary" dated 4th January, 1665: "Mr. Moore and I to 'Love in a Tubb,' which is very merry, but only so by gesture, not wit at all, which methinks is beneath the house." In Etherege's next piece, produced four years later, "She would if she could," we have introduced to us a female Tartuffe in the person of Lady Cockwood, a woman who, while perpetually and loudly speaking of her honour and ostensibly trying to lead her rake of a husband in the way of piety, is really all the while engaged in a disgraceful intrigue. It was quite possible and indeed very probable that Etherege had seen "Tartuffe" acted; he could not have read it before 1668, the year of his own comedy's appearance, inasmuch as "Tartuffe" was not printed until 1669. He may, however, have seen the first three acts represented at Versailles in May, 1664, or, what is more likely, he probably saw a performance of the whole comedy at Paris in the summer of 1667, or again, he may have been present at some private representation. (1)

(1) These suggestions have been made by Mr. Edmund Gosse: "Seventeenth Century Studies."

The conjecture that he saw the whole comedy performed at Paris in 1667 is probably the right one, as the hypocrisy of Tartuffe would then be fresh in his mind. It is known that Etherege had a great admiration for this masterpiece, in that it was he who encouraged Medbourne, the actor, to translate "Tartuffe," and wrote an epilogue for him at the time of the production of the French play in England in 1670. It is noticeable that Lady Cockwood's hypocrisy does not meet with the punishment it deserves, whereas Tartuffe ended his days in prison.

We get some idea from Pepys of the way in which "She would if she could" was received by the public; the entry in his "Diary," dated 6th February, 1668, is as follows: "My wife being gone before, I to the Duke of York's playhouse; where a new play of Etherege's called 'She would if she could'; . . . . but Lord! how full was the house and how silly the play, there being nothing in the world good in it . . . . Here was the Duke of Buckingham to-day openly sat in the pit; and there I found him with my lord Buckhurst, and Sedley, and Etherege, the poet; the last of whom I did hear mightily find fault with the actors, that they were out of humour and had not their parts perfect, and that Harris did do nothing, nor could so much as sing a ketch in it; and so was mightily concerned, while all the rest did, through the whole pit, blame the play as a silly, dull thing, though there was something very roguish and witty; but the design of the play, and end, mightily insipid." Shadwell confirms the complaint made by Etherege, in the preface to his own "Humourists." Harris acted the part of Sir Josceline Jolly. Steele's appreciation of the plays of dramatists who, to supply the deficiencies of wit have recourse to descriptions which are gratifying to sensual appetites, and in particular of Etherege's "She would if she could," is deserving of quotation; it occurs in number 51 of "The Spectator" (Saturday, April 28th, 1711): "This expedient has been used more or less by most of the authors who have succeeded on the stage; though I know not but one who has professedly writ a play upon the basis of the desire of multiplying our species, and that is the polite Sir George Etherege; if I understand what the lady would be at in the play called 'She Would if she Could.' Other poets have, here and there, given an intimation that there is this design under all the disguises and affectations which a lady may put on; but no author except this has made sure work of it, and put the imaginations of the audience upon this one purpose from the beginning to the end of the comedy. It has always fared accordingly; for whether it be that all who

go to this piece would if they could, or that the innocents go to it to guess only what 'she would if she could,' the play has always been well received."

Etherege's most successful comedy "The Man of Mode" [1] (1676) appeared three years after the death of Molière. Now in 1689 we learn that Etherege fled to Paris leaving his books behind him, among which were the "Œuvres de Molière" in two volumes; this must have been the edition of 1686. Here is an almost certain proof of his having read many of Molière's comedies, while the representations of a good number of them were doubtless seen by him. The whole of the French masterpieces had thus been acted before the appearance of Etherege's last comedy. It is interesting to consider the vast difference between Molière's remarkable dramatic activity and Etherege's characteristic idleness. No character in the "Man of Mode" can be said to be taken from Molière, but Molière's theme of "préciosité" in manners and speech stands out prominently throughout the play. Sir Fopling Flutter represents the very acme of "préciosité," while others also of the characters, for instance, Dorimant in Act II., reveal the same thing: "I fear," says he, "the restlessness of the body, Madam, proceeds from an unquietness of the mind."

On the whole it may be said that Etherege owes more to contemporary French social manners and customs than he does to the great comic dramatist of the period, and it must be remembered that society of the time of Charles II. was completely different from any previous society. Consequently the theatre which held up the mirror to such a society was also bound in any case to undergo a vast change. Thus the new French influence combined with the new conditions relating to stage affairs to make the audience feel that an innovation had taken place. The curtain of the stage on which "The Comical Revenge" was first acted, rose for the first time on the frivolous world of the eighteenth century. It is a matter for regret that many works dealing with the literary history of this period pass over Sir George Etherege's life and work with but little, or in some cases, with adverse comment,[2] the more so because it was he who founded English comedy as it was understood later by Congreve, Goldsmith, and Sheridan.

(1) "It is said that the original of Sir Fopling was Beau Hewit, son of Sir Thomas Hewit, Bart., of Pishiobury, Herts., that Bellair is Etherege himself; and that Dorimant represents the Earl of Rochester." (Note by Mr. G. A. Aitken, No. 65 of "The Spectator.").

(2) Mr. A. W. Verity has pointed out that Dennis was a fervent admirer of Etherege. It was Dennis who, in his anonymous "Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter" (1722), defended Etherege from the attacks of "the knight, his brother,"

Thomas Shadwell (1640-1692) is the next writer who claims our attention. His name would have been less prominent than it is had he not incurred Dryden's anger; the latter's well-known satire "MacFlecknoe" is responsible for the name of Shadwell being more widely known. In spite of Dryden's representing Shadwell as "never deviating into sense," his work shows considerable talent; but the author did not benefit by his experience on the continent as Etherege had done. In an essay prefixed to his comedy entitled "The Sullen Lovers," this dramatist expressed his great esteem for Ben Jonson, "who never wrote comedy without seven or eight considerable Humours." However, not a few of Molière's plots and situations were borrowed by him, as will be seen. In the preface to his comedy "The Sullen Lovers" or "The Impertinents" (1668), he confesses that the first hint he received was from a play of Molière, of three acts, called "Les Fâcheux" (1661) "upon which," he explains, "I wrote a great part of this before I read that; and after it came to my hands I found so little for my use (having before upon that hint design'd the fittest characters I could for my purpose) that I have made use of but two short scenes which I inserted afterwards, namely, the first scene in the second Act between Stanford and Roger, and Molière's story of piquette, which I have translated into backgammon, both of them being so varied you would not know them. But I freely confess my theft, and am asham'd on't, though I have the example of some that never yet wrote play without stealing most of it; and (like men that lie so long, till they believe themselves) at length, by continual thieving, reckon their stol'n goods their own too; which is so ignoble a thing that I cannot but believe that he that makes a common practice of stealing other men's wit, would, if he could with the same safety, steal anything else." Shadwell's imitation is regular and natural, but lacks the spirit of Molière's audacious lampoon. The following three entries of Pepys in his "Diary" are of great interest as revealing the impression made by this piece upon one who was actually present at its representation, and who was most capable of judging of its merits: (a) "2nd May, 1668: . . . then a play begins, called "The Sullen Lovers" or "The Impertinents" having many good humours in it, but the play tedious, and no design at

that is to say, Steele (these appear in Nos. 51 and 65 of "The Spectator"). "'Tis my humble opinion," writes Dennis, "that there is no dialogue extant in any language which has half the charm of the Terentian dialogue; what comes nearest to it is that of Etherege in 'Sir Fopling.'" (Letter to Henry Cromwell on "vis comica," October 11th, 1717). Again, in his criticism of Crown he speaks of "'that grace, that delicacy, that courtly air' which make the charm of Etherege." There are, moreover, similar allusions in a letter to Prior on "The Roman Satirists" (Familiar Letters, 1721).

all in it. (b) 4th May, 1668: . . . saw "The Impertinents" again, and with less pleasure than before, it being but a very contemptible play; and the pit did generally say that of it. (c) 5th May, 1668: . . . saw "The Impertinents" once more, now three times, and the only three days it hath been acted. And to see the folly how the house do this day cry up the play more than yesterday!" The diarist, moreover, informs us that he understands that by Sir Positive At-all is meant Sir Robert Howard, and that Lord St. John is intended by Mr. Woodcocke (entries of May 5th and 6th, 1668). In 1688 Shadwell produced "The Squire of Alsatia" founded on the "Adelphi" of Terence, but the author was undoubtedly influenced by Molière's "Ecole des Maris" (1661), itself the outcome of a Terentian suggestion. Considering that this subject had previously been treated, and has been taken up since that time, Shadwell's production is by no means unsatisfactory. It strikes us at first that the English dramatist may have been influenced by the "Adelphes" or "Ecole des Pères" of Baron, but on reference we find that Baron's translation did not appear until 1705, so that it is likely that Shadwell's comedy, based directly on that of Terence, was supplied with hints from the "Ecole des Maris," which piece probably gave him the idea to utilise Terence. The continuous discussions which are carried on between Sir William and Sir Edward Belfond concerning the training of sons make the reader feel that Shadwell must have had in his mind those memorable disputes between the two brothers Sganarelle and Ariste. Sganarelle and Sir William are for severity and constraint; Ariste and Sir Edward for generosity and kindness. These parallel scenes in Molière and Shadwell show "The Squire of Alsatia" to be inferior to the "Ecole des Maris"; the former, especially in the conversations between the two sons, Belfond Senior and Belfond Junior, is marred by a coarseness and a vulgarity entirely absent from Molière's play. It may, however, be said in Shadwell's defence that he, like Molière, tried in his play to brand a social evil. Belfond Senior, who, on becoming acquainted with London and Londoners, begins to despise his former country life, uses language and adopts attitudes such as to lead us to believe that Shadwell had Monsieur Jourdain in mind, while Sir William, after his arrival in town, has on several occasions experiences quite as unhappy as Pourceaugnac had after the unfortunate journey he made from Limoges to Paris.

Shadwell's comedy entitled "Bury Fair" (1689) was largely influenced by Molière's comedy "Les Précieuses Ridicules," although this was not the only source whence he

derived ideas. The Duke of Newcastle's "Triumphant Widow" may also have supplied the English dramatist with material. The piece is aimed against the absurdity of the English "Précieuses Ridicules" of that time. Shadwell, in his Prologue, makes a similar explanation to that of Molière in his preface, who there expressly disowns any intention to attack the real Précieuses; he says: "Les véritables Précieuses auraient tort de se picquer, lorsqu'on jouë les Ridicules, qui les imitent mal." Shadwell's words (spoken by Mr. Mountfort) were as follows:

"To all your Bury Sparks, he bid me say
That every part is fiction in his play,
Particular Reflections there are none,
Our Poet knows not one in all your Town.
If any has so very little wit
To think a Fop's dress can his person fit,
E'en let him take it, and make much of it."

This English comedy shows traces of other influence from Molière besides that of "Les Précieuses Ridicules." Wildish, in Act I., speaking ill of the inhabitants of St. Edmundsbury in turn reminds us of that immortal scene in the "Misanthrope" (Act. II., Sc. 5) where the assembled company takes upon itself to mention publicly and to magnify the foibles and eccentricities of their absent friends. Shadwell probably had this scene in mind when he made Wildish blurt out so peevishly to his valet unpleasant speeches such as that one wherein he expresses his opinion of Sir Humphrey Noddy: "A blunt, noisy, laughing, roaring, drinking fellow; as troublesome as a monkey, and as witless as a jackdaw. He is, at best, but a wag." Trim is afflicted with "préciosité" in speech; he says in reference to his affection for Mrs. Fantast in the first act: "I am her humble admirer, her adorer. I call her Dorinda, and she honours me with the name of Eugenius." It will be remembered that Madelon and Cathos informed their respected guardian Gorgibus that they had chosen finer names for themselves, and it was from this situation doubtless, that Shadwell derived his idea ("Les Précieuses Ridicules"—Sc. 4). Cathos says to her uncle: "Le nom de Polixène que ma cousine a choisi, et celui d'Aminte que je me suis donné, ont une grâce dont il faut que vous demeuriez d'accord." The characters of Mascarille and Jodelet, the two clever valets who pretend to be a marquis and a viscount respectively, and who with these borrowed titles succeed in gulling the conceited ladies, gave Shadwell the idea for Le Comte de Cheveux, who is really a barber and wig-maker, but deceived the English "précieuses," Lady and Mrs. Fantast, by his affected airs of nobility and his

glibness of tongue. Let us compare the following words of Le Comte (Act III.) : " Ah Madam ! take my peruke, and smellè de Pulvilio," with " Les Précieuses Ridicules " (Sc. 9) where Mascarille says to the ladies : " Attachez un peu sur ces gants la réflexion de votre odorat." Another reminder of " Le Misanthrope " (this time Act V., Sc. 11, where Alceste and Oronte endeavour to extract a confession from Célimène as to the one of them to whom she has given her heart) occurs in Act V. of " Bury Fair " where Wildish and Bellamy insist on Mrs. Gertrude explaining which of the two she really loves :

" Wildish : Madam, behold a pair of rivals hand in hand, and friends.

Bellamy : Who come to prostrate themselves at your feet, and must from your fair mouth expect their doom."

Le Comte, though at first starting the enterprise merely to please Wildish, becomes so pleased with the success of his efforts to win the heart of Mrs. Fantast that he ends up by being really in earnest. Like Mascarille and Jodelet he comes in for a severe beating at the hands of his master ; his impertinence, notwithstanding, is unquenchable, and he finally assumes the attitude of Tartuffe. Shadwell probably had Tartuffe in his mind when the impostor, having been stripped of his grandeur, remarked fiercely to Oldwit, Lady Fantast's husband : " Is all one Morbleu, if you not lette me have your person, me vill have your money, Testebleu." Tartuffe, in spite of the very kind treatment he had received in the past from Orgon, on being found out to be an impostor and on being ordered out of the house, indignantly retorted (Act IV., Sc. 7) :

" C'est à vous d'en sortir, vous qui parlez en maître,
La maison m'appartient, et je le ferai connaître."

Shadwell's comedy is very poor in comparison with " Les Précieuses Ridicules " in spite of the author's somewhat bold statement in his preface to the " Miser " : " Nor did I ever know a French comedy made use of by the worst of our poets that was not bettered by 'em."

Le Comte de Cheveux does not carry on the imposture half so cleverly and naturally as do Mascarille and Jodelet, while the humiliation to which the folly of the conceited ladies reduces them is far more skilfully contrived in " Les Précieuses Ridicules " than in " Bury Fair."

There are three other pieces by the same author which claim careful attention; they seem to have been passed over with little comment by most authors dealing with the dramatic literature of this period, but they are certainly interesting from the point of view of the extent to which they

were influenced by Molière. We will take them in the order of their production. "The Miser" was produced by Shadwell in 1672; "L'Avare" of Molière, which was represented for the first time in Paris at the "théâtre du Palais-Royal" in 1668 was his model. He has succeeded in producing a fairly successful play, although it remained for Fielding (whose name comes outside the period with which we are dealing) to make much improvement upon it. It is interesting, however, to notice that the Abbé Prévost, in Vol. 1 of "Le Pour et Contre" (Nombre IV.), a critical review which he started about the year 1733, has made a careful comparison of Fielding's "The Miser" with Molière's "L'Avare." As an introduction to his comparison of the two pieces, he says: "A la vérité l'on y a fait quelques changements pour le mettre tout à fait au goût de la nation; car le théâtre des Anglais est encore fort éloigné de ressembler au nôtre." The high opinion which he formed of the English version may be gathered from his concluding remarks: "Si la pièce entière dans l'état où il l'a mise, était traduite en française, L'Avare recevrait en France, sous cette nouvelle forme, des applaudissements qui ne tourneraient point à l'honneur du seul Molière." Shadwell astonishes us by a most audacious statement in his preface, which is deserving of being quoted in full: "The foundation of this play I took from one of Molière's called 'L'Avare'; but that having too few persons, and too little action, for an English theatre, I added to both so much that I may call more than half this play my own; and I think I may without vanity say that Molière's part of it has not suffered in my hands, nor did I ever know a French comedy made use of by the worst of our poets that was not bettered by them. 'Tis not barrenness of wit or invention that makes us borrow from the French, but laziness; and this was the occasion of my making use of 'L'Avare.'"

Voltaire in his "Sommaire de l'Avare" makes a strong protest against Shadwell's presumption: "On peut juger qu'un homme qui n'a pas assez d'esprit pour cacher sa vanité n'en a pas assez pour faire mieux que Molière. La pièce de Shadwell est généralement méprisée." An examination of these statements of the English dramatist will show that it is quite true that he has added more characters to those which were already in the original, so much so that he is justified in claiming as his own more than half of the play. He has also introduced more action into his piece than is to be found in "L'Avare." Unfortunately for him these additional characters and new scenes do not redound much to their author's credit. The new characters are, without exception, debauchees of the most degraded type, idiots,

rogues, and strumpets. A study of his characters, Rant and Hazzard, Squeeze and his son Timothy, gives some idea of the nature of the added scenes. Almost all their utterances are unfit for quotation. Even Theodore, who has many of the good qualities of his original, Cléante, has yet a tendency to return to those corrupt ways which he had formerly followed; this is one of the ideas of Shadwell's own invention. Cléante's shortcomings were caused by his unjust treatment at the hands of his niggardly parent, and M. Saint-Marc Girardin justly defends his conduct by saying: "Lorsque le père oublie l'honneur, le fils oublie le respect qu'il doit à son père. C'est un beau titre que celui de père de famille; c'est presqu'un sacerdoce, et s'il donne des droits, il impose aussi des devoirs." Cléante, however, has none of those wicked thoughts which from time to time assail Theodore. Bellamour's rival, Timothy Squeeze, is a most loathsome character; during one of his interviews with Theodora, he falls down in a state of hopeless intoxication, and Shadwell makes Goldingham, the miser, anxious to profit by this occurrence. "Come, come, he's the fitter for't for being drunk; if he be sober, he may repent him and ask a portion; stay here, I will fetch a parson immediately." Theodore, again, unlike Cléante, who in a fit of rage forgot the respect which he owed his father, actually formed the project of involving his miserly parent in a conspiracy against the government. Shadwell doubtless imagined that he was improving on Frosine, the "femme d'intrigue" in "L'Avare," by the introduction of Mrs. Cheatly; the latter, after flattering the old man as to the impatience shown by Isabelle (Theodore's ladylove, the Mariane of Molière's play) to become his wife, tries afterwards to lure him into matrimony with a false countess, a character played by a strumpet, Bridget. In the dénoûment of the piece, Theodore threatens his father that he will either keep the casket which the valet Robin had stolen, or will denounce his father's complicity in the conspiracy of which he himself has been the instigator. In order to end the comedy by crowning the passions of all the characters, Squeeze and his son Timothy are married to two girls of low repute. Shadwell, although adding new situations to his French original, has not failed to include absolutely everything which is to be found in Molière's play, even the minutest details. Mrs. Cheatly, for instance, instead of boasting that she could have married the Grand Turk with the Republic of Venice, asserts her willingness to be hanged if she could not have married the Pope with Queen Elizabeth, a remark to which Goldingham wittily responds by saying that he would hardly have wished for that event inasmuch as it might have spoilt the Reformation. Again, it will be

remembered that Frosine remarked to La Flèche: "Mon Dieu, je sais l'art de traire les hommes." Here is Mrs. Cheatly's corresponding remark to the valet Robin: "I warrant you, I have a way of tickling of 'em as they do trouts out of their senses." The scenes and situations to which allusion has been made conclusively prove that Shadwell has not improved upon his model, and, to say the least, his production is but a poor sample of that class of Molière-inspired English comedies of his day which he claims to be improvements on their respective originals. Riccoboni (Page 172 in his "Account of the Theatres of Europe," printed in 1741) has made some general remarks about English comedy, and, in particular, has made an allusion to the English versions of "L' Avare": "The English comedies are crowded with incidents, insomuch that having adapted to their stage some French plays, the authors have doubled the intrigue, or they have joined them with another plot to keep the spectator in breath, and not allow him time to wander with his thoughts. The Miser of Molière among others, which in the original is perhaps too full of intrigue, has much more in the English translations. Harpagon's mistress, in order to raise his aversion, making great expense at the charge of the old fellow, occasions an additional intrigue to that play, which increases the plot beyond measure."

Shadwell, in 1675, wrote a tragedy in rime, or more correctly, an opera, "Psyche." For this production he was largely indebted to the French Psyché, 1671, which is probably the most wonderful example in any literature of the art of collaboration, Molière, Pierre Corneille, and Quinault all having had a hand in it. Shadwell's indebtedness is patent, although in his preface he gives an elaborate explanation wherein he attempts to show that what he owes to the French piece is very small, while his own tragedy is, he claims, far and away above the French. "I am to encounter," says Shadwell, "those who are too great admirers of the French wit, who (if they do not like this play) will say the French Psyché is much better; if they do, they will say I have borrowed it all from the French. Whether the French be better, I leave to the men of wit (who understand both languages) to determine; I will only say, here is more variety and the scenes of passion are wrought up with more art; and this is much more a play than that. And I will be bold to affirm that this is as much a play as could be made upon this subject. That I have borrow'd it all from the French, can only be the objection of those who do not know that it is a fable written by Apuleius in his Golden Ass, where you will find most things in this play and in the French too. For several things concerning the decoration of the play I am

oblig'd to the French, and for the design of two of the only moving scenes in the French, which I may say, without vanity, are very much improved, being wrought up with more art in this than in the French play, without borrowing any of the thoughts from them."

In his preface to "The Libertine" (1676) Shadwell makes no direct statement to the effect that he was influenced by Molière's "Don Juan, ou le Festin de Pierre" (acted for the first time on February 5th, 1665). He says: "The story from which I took the hint of this play, is famous all over Spain, Italy, and France: it was first put into a Spanish play (as I have been told), the Spaniards having a tradition (which they believe) of such a vicious Spaniard, as is represented in this play. From them the Italian comedians took it, and four several French plays were made upon the story." In Genest's "English Stage" we read the following useful note: "Shadwell seems to have borrowed the business of the statue from Molière—but he has managed it better. Molière's "Don Juan, or the Feast of the Statue," was acted at Paris in February, 1665." The same subject had indeed been treated (in verse) by Thomas Corneille (1673), and De Villiers, an actor of the company of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, had produced a play dealing with the story (in 1658), which proved so successful that his piece remained on the stage for a considerable time after that of Molière had disappeared from it. These three versions, then, of Molière, the younger Corneille, and De Villiers were doubtless included in the four plays of which he speaks[1]; he was, in all probability, well acquainted with the manner in which they severally handled the plot. Further on in his preface Shadwell makes an attempt to dispel any ideas which might be entertained as to the representation of vice in so crude a form upon the stage; in the course of his argument he names an Italian piece "Il Atheisto Fulminato" which, he declares, an acquaintance of his has seen acted "in churches, on Sundays, as a part of devotion." "Some," he adds, "have thought it rather an useful moral than an encouragement to vice." This Italian version of the story had previously been utilised by Sir Aston Cokain for his "Tragedy of Ovid" (printed in 1662). But Shadwell does not say that he himself founded his play on this Italian work, neither does he name any one work which he did take as the foundation on which he built. The probability is that the English dramatist really based his play on the "Festin de Pierre" of Molière who had previously supplied him with material, and whom,

(1) Another version is mentioned on Page 462 of Vol. II. of Adolphe de Pubusque's "Histoire comparée des littératurès espagnole et française" (1842), in the following note: "1661: *Le Festin de Pierre*, seconde imitation de Tirso de Molina, par Dorimon."

as has been seen, he utilised in later years. It may be urged that Shadwell would not be likely to found a play upon one which itself had met with but little success ; it is true that "Don Juan" had not been heartily received, having had but fifteen representations in all. This cold reception was probably occasioned by the thought that it was unreasonable that Molière, who had removed so many extravagances from the stage, should now introduce new extravagances of his own invention. The French audience may have disapproved of the new method, but Shadwell would be the more eager to welcome a prose tragi-comedy introducing change of scene and supernatural incidents. The incidents which occur in the French and English plots by no means coincide, but the inspiration is the same. Don Juan and Don John are both types of men embodying the vicious qualities of hypocrisy, profligacy, atheism, debauchery and cruelty, together with the nobler characteristics of bravery, elegance, and intelligence. Don John, in the English play, is accompanied in his career of vice by his two under-studies, Don Antonio and Don Lopez, who prove themselves apt pupils of their indefatigable leader. Don Juan, in Molière's play, has no fellow-associates to follow his villainous course of life. But the most striking clue to the influence of Molière is the similarity in the words and actions of the two comic servants, Sganarelle and Jacomo, who are equally in mortal fear for their own lives, although each is constantly feigning great bravery. Shadwell's characters outnumber those of Molière, and an added grossness is manifest in certain of the scenes and situations. It was undoubtedly his acquaintance with Molière's play which enabled him to write so naturally and represent so vividly scenes which were able to satisfy the craving of those who love terror without probability. The most striking scene in the play sank deeply into the memories of the people of that time. In Act II., Sc. 1, of Wycherley's "The Plain Dealer," Novel says : "'Tis like eating with the Ghost in 'The Libertine.'"

It is interesting in this place to notice the criticism of Muralt (which is to be found in his "Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français et sur les Voyages"—édition de 1725) concerning this school of English comedy. This comedy, which he judges from the point of view of a severe moralist, shocks his good sense and his conscience. The humour (or, as he terms it, 'l'houmour') is nothing else than the faculty "de renverser les idées des choses, tournant la vertu en ridicule et rendant le vice agréable." He condemns Shadwell and Congreve just as Rousseau would have infallibly condemned them.

The last name of importance in the list of the first generation of dramatists who accompanied Dryden in the

foundation of a classic or regular drama in England, is that of Sir Charles Sedley (1639-1722). This writer, although gifted and witty, was totally without principle, religion, or even honour.[1] He wrote "The Mulberry Garden" (1668) [2] which is without the slightest doubt in part founded on Molière's "L'Ecole des Maris" (1661). There is a great resemblance between the characters of Sir John Everyoung and Sir Samuel Forecast, and Molière's well-known characters of Sganarelle and Ariste. The plot has suffered in the hands of the adapter, and the play may be said to be of little value, although it seems to have been appreciated by the author's contemporaries. There is an interesting insertion in Pepys' "Diary" having reference to "The Mulberry Garden": ". . . . Sir Charles Sedley's new play, so long expected, "The Mulberry Garden" of whom, being so reputed a wit, all the world do expect great matters." The note goes on to say that the King, Queen, and all the court were present at the performance, and that the house was full. The diarist declares that there is nothing extraordinary in the play; he did not see the king laugh once during the whole representation, and he describes the music as being very bad (Entry dated May 18th, 1668). Langbaine expresses his opinion thus concerning Sedley's indebtedness to Molière: "I dare not say that the characters of Sir John Everyoung and Sir Samuel Forecast are copies of Sganarelle and Ariste in Molière's "L'Ecole des Maris," but I may say that there is some resemblance, tho' whoever understands both languages, will readily, and with justice, give our English wit the preference: and Sir Charles is not to learn to copy nature from the French." His comedy entitled "The Grumbler" (printed in 1702) is a translation from "Le Grondeur," an excellent comedy of the Molière-Regnard type by Brueys and Palaprat; the French piece was produced in 1691. The character of Grichard, itself practically without humour, is yet the origin of the celebrated Croaker of Goldsmith's "The Good Natured Man."[3] Goldsmith adapted "The Grumbler" as a farce for Quick's benefit in 1773 (Biographia Dramatica), so that Brueys and Palaprat, Sedley, and Goldsmith form a direct succession of channels. Sedley, it is interesting to notice, is introduced into Dryden's "Essay of Dramatic Poesy" under the name of Lisideius [4] as one who firmly supported and strongly defended the imitation of French comedy by the English writers.

(1) Jesse: "England under the Stuarts."

(2) Genest informs us that this comedy was never acted, and was printed without the names of the performers. This statement is disproved by the passage we quote from Pepys' "Diary."

(3) Dr. A. W. Ward: "English Dramatic Literature."

(4) Lisideius was doubtless a rough anagram on Sedley's name, just as Neander probably was on that of Dryden.

## CHAPTER II.

Influence of Molièresque comedy upon the second or central group in the Restoration drama, that is, those comic dramatists who appeared early in the seventies. (Mrs. Behn, Wycherley, Otway, Crown).

The comic dramatists of this group who are deserving of special notice are four in number; we will take them in chronological order. Mrs. Aphra Behn (1640-1689) merits a brief consideration in connexion with this subject; while her non-dramatic writings reveal no small acquaintance with French literature, her comedies, so far as we have been able to ascertain, contain but two instances of direct borrowing from Molière himself. These plays are seventeen in number, fifteen having been written before, and two after the Revolution of 1688. An excellent account of this writer is to be found in the Retrospective Review (volume 1), and an interesting pamphlet was published by John Pearson in 1872 entitled "Two centuries of testimony in favour of Mrs. Aphra Behn." Her comedies are grossly indelicate, but in them she shows herself to have been a woman thoroughly acquainted with the world and its ways; herein lies their usefulness, and to study her comedies is one of the best and surest ways of securing a true knowledge of the men and manners of the British capital during the latter half of the seventeenth century. Moreover, putting aside the indecency which pervades her plays, and judging them from the point of view of literary merit, we cannot deny that they reveal great genius on the part of the authoress; the conversation in the dialogue is brilliant, the plots are skilfully arranged, and striking situations are produced. The two instances in which she borrowed from Molière are as follows: (a) The plot of her play "Sir Patient Fancy" (1678) has been taken from Molière's "Le Malade Imaginaire" (1673), and she has also derived ideas from Molière's ingenious satire, "M. de Pourceaugnac" (1669). She received much blame for this borrowing, and tartly responded in the preface to the first edition of the play. The hypochondriacal temper of Sir Patient, whose belief that he is a hopeless invalid is taken advantage of to deceive him, forms the basis of many highly comic scenes. (b) The other instance occurs in the play of "The False Count" or "A new way to play an old Game" (1682). The hint of Isabella being deceived by Guillaume, the chimney-sweeper, is borrowed from Molière's "Les Précieuses Ridicules" (1659).

We now come to William Wycherley (1640-1715), the typical Restoration dramatist. His play, "The Gentleman Dancing-Master" (1672), of which the dancing-lesson scenes

were suggested by the "El Maestro de Danzar" of Calderon, bears a distinct resemblance to the manner of Molière, and the intrigue of the piece is somewhat like that of "L'Ecole des Femmes" (1662).

Wycherley's "The Country Wife" (1675) owes its plot to the "Ecole des Maris" (1661) and the "Ecole des Femmes" (1662) of Molière. It is ridiculous to attempt to excuse the gross immorality of this "bête noire" of the Puritans by suggesting that it may be nothing but a "powerful and scathing satire upon those very vices of which it has been popularly supposed to be a hotbed." (1) To imagine the existence of a moral intention in a work which displays no vestige of moral justice, is absurd. Lord Macaulay, in his essay on the "Comic dramatists of the Restoration," has fully dealt with the revolting character of the piece. Agnès and Isabelle, for instance, the two corresponding characters to Wycherley's Miss Peggy (alias Mrs. Margery Pinchwife), have been transformed into a morally bad woman. There is nothing in either Agnès or Isabelle to forfeit our respect, and we readily join with Macaulay in being filled with horror at the transformation Wycherley has made. We note that Mrs. Pinchwife corresponds with Mr. Horner on two occasions. Her first letter, needless to say, grossly immoral, is based on the letter which Agnès sent to Horace, while the second one is a vulgar version of Isabelle's letter to Valère in the "Ecole des Maris." Now Agnès' letter is a real marvel as regards composition, and is perfectly innocent. We cannot sympathise with Isabelle quite so much as with Agnès; the former deliberately has recourse to deceit, while the latter's actions proceed from natural instinct and constitutional will. Yet, when we think of Sganarelle's scandalous treatment of her, Isabelle's actions seem to us well-nigh justifiable, and if in her letter she shows herself a little too forward for her sex, it it due to her awkward position; her letter is at least pure, honest, and straightforward. A comparison of these two epistles with Mrs. Pinchwife's two letters to Mr. Horner will reveal the shocking and bald coarseness of the latter. But leaving aside the immorality of the piece, we must acknowledge that it is written with considerable spirit. Mr. Horner, in spite of the gross indecency to which he resorts in bringing his designs to a successful issue, reveals a sound knowledge of human nature such as it was at the time of the Restoration. Moreover, from the point of view of wit and humour, Horner is not devoid of merit. Wycherley, in "The Plain Dealer," has, in defence of Horner, commented on this character and

(1) W. C. Ward: (Vol. I. of edition of the plays of Vanbrugh). (Introduction).

the double meaning of the name in almost the identical words of Molière in his "Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes." Hazlitt speaks very highly in praise of "The Country Wife," and regrets that it is not entirely of Wycherley's own invention. By his criticism it would appear that he was unaware that the "Ecole des Maris" supplied the English dramatist with any suggestion to eke out the material contained in the "Ecole des Femmes," as he brings forward certain scenes which he claims to be of Wycherley's own invention, whereas, in point of fact, they clearly derive their origin from "L'Ecole des Maris." In Genest's "English Stage" (Vol. 1, page 150) there is a reference to this indebtedness to the "Ecole des Maris": "Pinchwife carries her (i.e., Mrs. Pinchwife dressed in Alithea's clothes) to Horner's lodgings, supposing her to be his sister—Wycherley has borrowed this part of his plot from Molière's "School for Husbands"—but he has improved what he has borrowed." Hazlitt, too, would have Agnès to be much inferior as a character to Mrs. Pinchwife: "Agnès has a great deal of the same unconscious impulse and heedless naïveté, but hers is sentimentalised and varnished over (in the French fashion) with long-winded apologies and analytical distinctions. (It wants the same simple force and home truth.) It is not so direct and downright. Miss Peggy is not even a novice in casuistry; she blurts out her meaning before she knows what she is saying, and she speaks her mind by her actions oftener than by her words." There is something to be said in support of this appreciation, although it would seem that Molière's inferiority in this respect was due to the fact that he was not prepared to make Agnès blurt out things, innocent indeed, but calculated to shock the hearers, as his successor in England had no compunction in doing. Wycherley knew full well that it was a "frank age," and that the hearers of his play would by no means be shocked.

The connexion between the "Plain Dealer" (1677), in which the author's cynicism shows itself at its height, and Molière's immortal "Misanthrope" (1666), has been dealt with by numerous writers. Macaulay, in his essay to which reference has already been made, has shown how Molière's noble Alceste has been transformed by the author into "the greatest rascal that was to be found even in his own writings." With regard to Wycherley's transformation of Molière's Célimène, Taine (Histoire de la littérature anglaise —Book III.) has rightly said that the English dramatist has wiped out with one stroke the manners of a great lady, the woman's delicacy, the tact of the lady of the house, the politeness, the refined air, the superiority of wit and knowledge of the world, in order to substitute for them the impu-

dence and deceit of a foul-mouthed courtesan. That famous scene in "Le Misanthrope" (Act II., Sc. 5) which has frequently been brought forward on the English stage, reveals the various characters slandering their neighbours with surprising audacity, though, it must be confessed, with brilliant wit. Although we can conceive it as quite possible for an audience of that depraved age to have listened with delight to such a play in which their own follies were reflected, yet such scenes are most revolting to a reader of to-day. We cannot excuse Wycherley by supposing his intention to have been good, for his own life proves that he was of all men the most unfit to pose as a leader of reform of the vices of his age. The most that can be said is that Wycherley, a possessor of these vices, also represented them on the stage. At the end of the play we find that vice goes unpunished. Taine (Histoire de la littérature anglaise) has in no way exaggerated the impression which Manly makes upon the mind of the modern reader when he describes him as a character who shows in a concise manner Wycherley's talent, and his morality wholly formed of energy and indelicacy. He invites his readers to compare with the sayings of Alceste such tirades as this: "Such as you, like common whores and pickpockets, are only dangerous to those you embrace." He also cites the following short passage in contrast with the character of Philinte: "But faith, could you think that I was a friend to those I hugged, kissed, flattered, bowed to? When their backs were turned, did I not tell you they were rogues, villains, rascals, whom I hated and despised?" (P. 368 of Vol. II. of Van Laun's translation of Taine's works). It is interesting to notice that Act II. Sc. 1, of the English play is largely modelled on Molière's "La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes." Wycherley had wit, energy, and the power exactly to suit the popular taste. What the popular taste was, everyone who is acquainted with the state of England at the Restoration period fully knows. It needed so little on Wycherley's part to cultivate this power that it might be said that the task which he had set himself was of the most congenial kind, and one wich he would carry out with éclat. Wycherley's one intention was to amuse, and instead of doing good, as did Molière's comic drama, his pieces, by scoffing at all that was pure and noble, gave direct encouragement to vice and debauchery. We can imagine J. J. Rousseau thundering out, this time with far more justice, the scathing denunciation which he uttered in reference to Molière's comedies: "C'est une école de mauvaises mœurs plus dangereuses que dans les livres mêmes où l'on fait profession de les enseigner."

The piece of Thomas Otway (1651-1685) which concerns us is "The Cheats of Scapin," brought out in 1677. It was performed on the same evening as the author's "Titus and Bérénice," a play in three acts and written in nine. It is unnecessary here to make any special investigation into the real sources of the tragedy of Otway; it is sufficient to point out that a study of the piece inclines us to believe that it is not merely a translation of Racine's "Bérénice" (1670), as is generally supposed, but that it has been influenced in no small degree by the "Tite et Bérénice" (1670) of Pierre Corneille in rivalry with which Racine's tragedy was produced. It will be remembered that both plays were written at the command of Louis XIV. to compliment his sister. Dibdin [1] maintains that Corneille's tragedy is the better of the two, but that "Corneille introducing truth where he was commanded to use flattery, his polite and politic rival triumphed over him." Be that as it may, all at the present day are unanimous in favour of Racine's version of the subject. There can be little doubt but that Otway had both French tragedies in his hands when he wrote "Titus and Bérénice." The "Cheats of Scapin" is a translation, though not a slavishly literal one, of Molière's "Les Fourberies de Scapin" which was first represented on May 24th, 1671. Both the tragedy and the farce were acted on the same night of February, 1677, and both were attended with considerable success. The farce was really a very clever representation of Molière's piece, and held the stage for a long time. Genest [2] notes that it had nine revivals between the years 1705 and 1812. When Otway, who of himself had no comic genius, was tempted by the welcome given to his version of Scapin to attempt the writing of comedy on his own account, he met with little success, and none of his other comedies remained long before the public. Let us compare the two plays: Act I. of "The Cheats of Scapin" is not a literal translation of "Les Fourberies." Yet, not only is the dialogue practically the same, but minor details have been reproduced with fidelity. Otway, of course, made his production of such a mould as to suit the tastes of his time and audience. Here are two short parallel quotations:

(a) Argante: "Va-t-en, pendard; va-t-en me chercher mon fripon, tandis que j'irai rejoindre le seigneur Géronte, pour lui conter ma disgrâce." (Molière).

(b) Thrifty: "Hang-dog, go find out my rake-hell whilst I go to my brother Gripe, and inform him of my misfortune." (Otway).

(1) Dibdin: "English Stage."
(2) Genest: "English Stage."

The wit, as these two passages show, is much coarser in Otway than in Molière. In Act II. of the English piece, Molière is copied with considerable exactness :

(a) Argante : " Cinq ou six cents fièvres quartaines qui le puissent serrer ! Se moque-t-il des gens ? (Molière).

(b) Thrifty : " 'Ouns and heart, £500. Five hundred devils take him, and fry and frigasee the dog ; does he take me for a madman ?" (Otway).

The order of events is faithfully copied by Otway in the third Act. The two girls mutually commiserate with each other, Scapin succeeds in beguiling his master in each play, and the dénoûments are identical. Scapin's last words in the French and English comedies respectively are these :

(a) " Et moi, qu'on me porte au bout de la table, en attendant que je meure." (Molière).

(b) " Ay, and let them carry me to the lower end of the table,
Where in my chair of state I'll sit at ease,
And eat and drink that I may die in peace." (Otway).

The comedies of John Crown (1640 circ.—1705 circ.) which show any influence from Molière, are three in number ; we will consider them in chronological order. In 1675 he produced at the Duke's theatre the comedy entitled " The Country Wit." This play which contains considerable gaiety and was a favourite piece of Charles II., partly owes its origin to Molière's slight sketch of " Le Sicilien ou L'Amour Peintre " (1666). Both the plot and the language have been in part taken from Molière. Crown has especially made good use of Act I., Sc. 10, of Molière's piece, the intrigue between Adraste and Isidore, for that scene in which Rambles becomes a painter for the express purpose of gaining an opportunity to converse with Betty Frisque ; moreover, there are other clear instances of influence from the French play. The English comedy, on the whole, is marred by low wit, and shows very little originality. Crown has certainly not fully carried out the rule which he laid down for himself in his epistle to the " Destruction of Jerusalem " which was as follows : " That all foreign coin should be melted down, and receive a new stamp, if not addition of metal, before it will pass current in England and be judged sterling." It is interesting here to notice that this same scene, in which Adraste turns painter, was utilised by Steele in 1705 for the plot of his comedy " The Tender Husband, or the Accomplish'd Fools."

Crown's "Sir Courtly Nice, or It Cannot Be" (1685) is decidedly the best as it was the most popular of his comedies. It was written at the command of Charles II., who gave Crown a Spanish play "No Pued Esser" of Moreto. Crown subsequently discovered that this plot had previously appeared on the English stage in 1668 under the title of "Tarugo's Wiles" by Thomas St. Serfe. But the important point is that Sir Courtly's song of "Stop Thief" is a paraphrase of Mascarille's "Au Voleur" in Molière's "Les Précieuses Ridicules."

Lastly, "The English Friar, or the Town Sparks" (1689) shows clearly that its plot was suggested by that of Molière's "Tartuffe." The characters parallel with Orgon and Tartuffe are respectively Lord Stately and Father Finical. The latter's hypocrisy is not so cleverly depicted as is that of Molière's important character. (1)

(1) It is interesting to notice that in 1675 was published "Andromaque," a tragedy translated from Racine into English verse by "a young gentleman," says Langbaine, "who had a great esteem for all French Plays, and particularly for this." Crown revised this play, reducing the verse to prose, but its expected success on the stage was not realised. Another point worthy of notice is that in 1692 Crown published a burlesque poem in four cantos, partly translated from Boileau's "Lutrin."

## CHAPTER III.

Influence of the comedy of Molière and his contemporaries upon the group of playwrights who appeared at the close of the century (Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, Cibber, Mrs. Centlivre, Steele).

We will take the writers whose names appear in this division in chronological order, and investigate the extent to which they were influenced by Molièresque comedy. A study of the comedies of William Congreve (1670-1729) in the order of their production reveals on the part of the author a steady and gradual improvement in dramatic treatment; from his début as a dramatist at the early age of twenty-one when (in 1691) he wrote the "Old Bachelor," until his last two pieces appeared, namely, "Love for Love" (1695) and "The Way of the World" (1700), which are really of equal merit, although the former found greater favour with the public, Congreve shows a decided advance in every branch of the dramatic art. His wit becomes more sparkling with advancing years and increasing experience. It may be safely affirmed that no modern comic dramatist, with the sole exception of Molière himself, has excelled Congreve in this special branch of wit. Riccoboni in his "Account of the theatres of Europe" speaks in high praise of Congreve, (Page 175—"The English Theatre"): "Amongst the crowd of English poets, Mr. Congreve is most esteemed for comedy. He was perfectly acquainted with nature; and was living in 1727, when I was in London; I conversed with him more than once, and found in him taste joined with great learning. It is rare to find many dramatic poets of his stamp." His merits were also extolled by Voltaire, who held that "Congreve raised the glory of comedy to a greater height than any English writer before or since."

The explanation of such marked improvement in his works seems to us to present little difficulty. Congreve, a man of wide reading, doubtless found an intellectual treat in the masterpieces of Molière, and it is quite probable that this acquaintance with the plays of the French dramatist is the real cause of the increasing dramatic worth which a systematic study of this writer's comedies reveals. The "Old Bachelor" is not devoid of passages and situations which most certainly owe their existence to Molière, although here Wycherley seems rather to have been laid under contribution. But with regard to the "Double Dealer," which was written three years afterwards, a sufficiently long time to have enabled the dramatist to have greatly extended his reading, so great was the universal favour which it gained

amongst poets and literary critics that Dryden felt justified in saying in the dedicatory address :

" Heav'n, that but once was prodigal before,
To Shakespeare gave as much, she could not give *him* more."

The passages to which reference will be made will prove that without the slightest doubt he was now closely following in the steps of Molière. Let us examine the English comedies individually, noticing passages of similar language to certain of Molière's master-strokes. In the first place, the following extract, a speech of Sir Joseph Wittoll, shows " préciosité " ; it has a very similar ring to portions of " Les Précieuses Ridicules " (1659), Molière's first attempt at social satire. Here it is : " Hem ! Hem ! Sir, I most submissively implore your pardon for my transgression of ingratitude and omission : having my entire dependence, Sir, on the superfluity of your goodness, which, like an inundation, will, I hope, totally immerge the recollection of my error, and leave me floating in your sight, upon the full-blown bladders of repentance—by the help of which I shall once more hope to swim into your favour."

(Old Bachelor, Act II,).

The conversation between the girls, Araminta and Belinda, in Act II., Sc. 3, is in a similar strain to that memorable scene in " Les Femmes Savantes " between the two sisters, one of whom was so deeply imbued with learning as to despise everything relating to love, and to look down upon her sister who was, on the contrary, inclined to follow the natural tendencies of youth. The scene in the " Misanthrope," too, between Célimène and Arsinoé has characteristics of a like nature to this same English scene. We have only to turn to the following few scenes (Sc. IV., Sc. IX.) of the same Act to convince ourselves that Congreve was thinking of that situation in " Les Précieuses Ridicules " where Mascarille and Jodelet hold conversation with the two conceited ladies, Madelon and Cathos. In the English play, however, Bellamour and Vainlove are in earnest in their love for Belinda and Araminta respectively. The introduction of the music-master as a means of expressing Araminta's real sentiments to her lover reminds us of Angélique's great love for Cléante, in " Le Malade Imaginaire," where a music master is introduced for the purpose of beguiling the obnoxious intentions of an obdurate parent. In the third act of the " Old Bachelor," the reluctant parting of Setter with Lucy reminds us of several parallel scenes in Molière, where the valet and waiting-woman simultaneously with their respective master and mistress, experience alternate quarrels and reconciliations.

"Setter: What, no token of amity, Lucy? You and I don't use to part with dry lips.

Lucy: No, no, avaunt—I'll not be slabbered and kiss'd now, I'm not i' th' humour.

Setter: I'll not quit you so—I'll follow you and put you into the humour."

The obscene conversation between Hartwell and Sylvia is an indelicate counterpart of that between Alceste and Célimène, the words of pure and undefiled love being superseded by vulgarity and suggestive remarks of an objectionable kind. Hartwell says: "No, no, dear ignorance, thou beauteous changeling—I tell thee I do love thee, and tell it for a truth, a naked truth, which I'm ashamed to discover." Congreve may have been thinking of the two characters, Arnolphe and Agnès, and especially the latter's innocence when he made Sylvia speak in this strain to Hartwell: "Nay, if you would marry me, you should not come to bed to me—you have such a beard and would so prickle me."

The following remark of Hartwell is a re-echo of Arnolphe's advice to Agnès, and the maxim which he intended his ward should obey: "Ay, ay, in my old days people married where they loved, but that fashion is changed, child."

The fourth act in the "Old Bachelor" contains a speech by Fondlewife of like sentiment to certain passages in the "Ecole des Femmes": "Wife—have you thoroughly considered how detestable, how heinous, and how crying a sin the sin of adultery is? Have you weigh'd it, I say? For it is a very weighty sin; and although it may lie heavy upon thee, yet thy husband must also bear his part; for thy iniquity will fall upon his head."

Arnolphe, it will be remembered, read in firm tones to Agnès "The Maxims of Wedlock, or the duties of a married woman, together with her daily exercise." This jealous guardian, elsewhere in the French comedy, severely reprimanded his innocent ward for her familiarity with young Horace. "Is it no longer a sin," asks she, "when people marry?" "No," replies Arnolphe. "Marry me then quickly to take away the guilt."

It is certain that the "Double Dealer" (1694), owes very much to Molière, notwithstanding the fact that Congreve, in the "Epistle Dedicatory," clearly states: "I design'd the moral first, and to that moral I invented the fable, and do not know that I have borrow'd one hint of it anywhere." Howbeit, not a few of Molière's chief subjects of social satire are conspicuous. The first of these is "préciosité" as illustrated by Brisk's extravagant expression: "Thy amputation from the body of our society" (Act I.,

Sc. 2, "Double Dealer"), the tone of which points to the author's acquaintance with "Les Précieuses Ridicules" (1659). Under this heading may be included those passages which reveal a knowledge of "Les Femmes Savantes" (1672). Lady Froth, a pretender to poetry, wit, and learning, possesses the same extravagances which were characteristic of Philaminte, Armande, and Bélise. How very similar in tendency is Act I., Sc. 4, of "Les Femmes Savantes" to Act II., Sc. 5, of the "Double Dealer"! Lady Plyant encourages Mellefont thus: "But don't be melancholic, don't despair, but never think that I'll grant you anything," while Bélise thinks that she is giving renewed hope to Clitandre by the following amatory discourse:

"Aimez-moi, soupirez, brûlez pour mes appas;
Mais qu'il me soit permis de ne le savoir pas.
Je puis fermer les yeux sur vos flammes secrètes
Tant que vous vous tiendrez aux muets interprètes;
Mais, si la bouche vient à s'en vouloir mêler,
Pour jamais de ma vue il vous faut exiler."

The second current of influence is hypocrisy, with Tartuffe as its champion. Maskwell is much like Tartuffe in the part which he plays in the English comedy, while Mellefont is the English character corresponding to Orgon in Molière's masterpiece. Both Tartuffe and Maskwell are social impostors who impose to the fullest extent on the advantages held out to them by their devoted patrons. That revolting scene at the end of the first Act between Lady Touchwood and Maskwell is clearly the result of Congreve's acquaintance with "Tartuffe," especially those passages which describe the conversations of Elmire and Tartuffe, where the latter for once reveals himself in his true colours of a villain of the deepest dye. There is, however, one important difference; in Congreve's version, both tempter and tempted are wicked, both are lustful, whereas in Molière, Elmire is a perfectly virtuous woman who is sacrificing herself for the sake of disgusting her husband with his vile protégé. Lady Touchwood exclaims in Act I., Sc. 6:—"More! Audacious villain. O, what's more is most my shame—have you not dishonour'd me?" To this Maskwell insolently retorts: "No, that I deny; for I never told in all my life; so that conclusion's answer'd; on to the next."

This last idea is parallel with Tartuffe's attitude of self-defence (Act IV., Sc. 5):

"Et ce n'est pas pécher que pécher en silence."

Maskwell's soliloquy at the close of the second Act is expressive of sentiments which coincide with those of Tartuffe concerning Mariane. Cynthia, throughout Act II., shows the common sense and lack of pedantry of Henriette,

and, at the same time, the purity and modesty of Dorine and Mariane. Passing on to the sixth scene in Act V. of the "Double Dealer," we find that Lady Touchwood says to her lord concerning Maskwell: "Is there not reward enough in raising his low fortune, but he must mix his blood with mine and wed my niece?" Tartuffe, it will be remembered, had so successfully found his way into the good graces of his patron that the latter finally made him heir to his whole estate. At the end of Act III., in the French comedy, Orgon, after the quarrel with his son, addresses the hypocrite in this strain:

"Pour les mieux braver tous,
Je ne veux point avoir d'autre héritier que vous,
Et je vais de ce pas, en fort bonne manière,
Vous faire de mon bien donation entière."

Congreve has plainly derived Act V., Sc. 17, where Cynthia and Lord Touchwood hide and listen while an important conversation takes place between Maskwell and Lady Touchwood, from "Tartuffe" (Act IV., Sc. 5), where Orgon hides during that well-known interview between Tartuffe and Elmire. Tartuffe and Maskwell both intend to marry the daughter and corrupt the wife of their respective patrons.

Again in Act V., Sc. 19, Lord Touchwood, on discovering the fatal mistake which he had made in his profound trust of the villain Maskwell, exclaims: "Astonishment binds up my rage! Villainy upon villainy! Heav'ns, what a long track of dark deceit has this discovered! I am confounded when I look back, and want a clue to guide me through the various mazes of unheard-of treachery." Orgon was briefer in his exclamation of astonishment:—

"Voilà, je vous l'avoue, un abominable homme! Je n'en puis revenir, et tout ceci m'assomme." The Misanthrope (1668) also furnished a great amount of material to Congreve for the "Double Dealer." In the third scene of Act I. of the English piece, Mellefont reproves his friend Careless for not having displayed more humane conduct towards Brisk, just as Molière frequently brings Philinte into the presence of his friend Alceste in order that the former may refute the latter's pseudo-arguments. Both Alceste and Careless, although widely differing in many respects, are good men at heart and regret the existence of so many social evils.

There is a most striking similarity between Act III., Sc. 4, of the "Double Dealer" and Act II., Sc. 4, of the "Misanthrope." The scene in Molière depicts the enormous amount of scandal which was talked regularly in aristocratic circles. Clitandre has just come from the court where he

declares he has seen Cléante most ridiculously attired:

"N'a-t-il point quelque ami qui pût sur ses manières,
D'un charitable avis lui prêter les lumières."

The coquette immediately supports Clitandre's opinion, whereat Acaste affirms that Damon, the argumentative person is even more extravagant. "Why! He kept me a full hour out of my chaise in the heat of the sun!" Timante and Géralde are yet more severely maligned by the assembled company. Bélise's conversation is terribly dry; in vain does one have recourse to all kinds of commonplace remarks in order to attack the stupidity of her silence. Adraste is a man puffed up with the love of himself, while Cléon merely owes the esteem in which people of fashion hold him, to the merits of his cook and his table. At this juncture Alceste intervenes and puts a stop to further scandalous conversations. Now on turning to the scene in Congreve's comedy we find it hard to think that he was not to a great extent influenced by the scene in the French masterpiece:

"Lord Froth: Won't you join with us? We were laughing at my Lady Whistler, and Mr. Sneer.

Lady Froth: Ay, my dear—were you? O, filthy Mr. Sneer; he's a most nauseous figure, a most fulsamic fop, for he spent two days together in going about Covent Garden to suit the lining of his coach with his complexion.

Lord Froth: O silly! Yet his aunt is as fond of him as if she had brought the ape into the world herself.

Brisk: Who, my Lady Toothless? O, she's a mortifying spectacle; she's always chewing the cud like an old ewe.

Cynthia: Fie, Mr. Brisk! Eringo's for her cough!

Lady Froth: I have seen her take 'em half-chewed out of her mouth to laugh, and then put them in again. Foh!

Lord Froth: Foh!

Lady Froth: Then she's all ready to laugh when Sneer offers to speak—and sits in expectation of his no jest, with her gums bare, and her mouth open.

Brisk: Like an oyster at low ebb, I' gad, ha, ha, ha.

Cynthia: (aside) Well, I find there are no fools so inconsiderable in themselves, but they can render other people contemptible by exposing their infirmities.

Lady Froth: Then that t'other great strapping lady—I can't hit of her name; the old fat fool that paints so exorbitantly.

Brisk: I know whom you mean—But deuce take me, I can't hit of her name neither—Paints, d'ye say? Why she lays it on with a trowel. Then she has a great beard that bristles through it, and makes her look as if she were plastered with lime and hair, let me perish."

It is not difficult to point to other passages very similar indeed to different parts of Molière's comedies; for example, the pert coxcomb Brisk's action in interrupting an earnest conversation between Mellefont and Careless (Act I., Sc. 2) closely resembles "Les Fâcheux" (1661), the hero of which piece is Eraste, a man perpetually tormented by bores.[1] We will terminate this survey of the extent to which Congreve has manifestly gone to school with Molière in composing his "Double Dealer," by citing a passage from the critical work of Mr. Edmund Gosse, who, alluding to the central portion of the third act, is perhaps speaking of the English writer in higher terms of praise than he really deserves: "In competing with Molière in the absurd blue-stocking scene between Lady Froth and Brisk, and in the criticism of her ladyship's remarkable lyric, the English poet has the advantage. The conversation between Oronte and and Philinte, with Alceste growling in the background, the fatuity of the "petits vers doux, tendres et langoureux," the insight into the vanity of the amateur—these are delicious in the "Misanthrope" and of a very high order of writing. But Molière—dare we say it?—prolongs the scene a little too far; the episode threatens to become wearisome to all but literary spectators; whereas the brief and ludicrous exchange of compliments between Brisk and Lady Froth is soon over; the coachman poem is in itself more funny than "L'Espoir," and the whole incident, as it seems to me, is treated in a more laughable, and dramatically in a more legitimate way by Congreve than by Molière." The next work of Congreve "Love for Love" (1695) may, without exaggeration, be described as the most brilliant pure comedy of manners in the English language. Let us follow the comedy through its various acts. To begin with, the sentiment conveyed by the following speech of Jeremy in Act I., is similar to that contained in a speech in "Le Cocu Imaginaire" (1660); the servant is addressing his master, Valentine: "Sir, you're a gentleman and probably understand

(1) Edmund Gosse: "Life of William Congreve."

this fine feeding ; but, if you please, I had rather be at board wages. Does your Epictetus, or your Seneca here, or any of these poor rich rogues, teach you how to pay your debts without money? Will they shut up the mouths of your creditors? Will Plato be bail for you? Or Diogenes, because he understands confinement and lived in a tub, go to prison for you, 'Slife, sir, what do you mean to mew yourself up here with three or four musty books, in commendation of starving or poverty? "

We refer to Gros-René's speeches to his master Lélie, in the seventh scene of " Le Cocu Imaginaire " :

" Avez-vous le diable dans le corps,
Pour ne pas succomber à de pareils efforts?
Depuis huit jours entiers, avec vos longues traites
Nous sommes à piquer des chiennes de mazettes,
De qui le train maudit nous a tant secoués,
Que je m'en sens pour moi tous les membres roués ;
Sans préjudice encore d'un accident bien pire,
Qui m'afflige un endroit que je ne veux pas dire,
Cependant arrivé, vous sortez bien et beau,
Sans prendre de repos, ni manger un morceau."

Further on he continues the same theme in this strain :

" Oui, mais un bon repas vous serait nécessaire,
Pour s'aller éclaircir, Monsieur, de cette affaire,
Et votre cœur, sans doute, en deviendroit plus fort,
Pour pouvoir résister aux attaques du sort.
J'en juge par moi-même, et la moindre disgrâce,
Lorsque je suis à jeûn me saisit, me terrasse ;
Mais quand j'ai bien mangé, mon âme est ferme à tout
Et les plus grands revers n'en viendraient pas à bout,
Croyez-moi, bourrez-vous, et sans réserve aucune,
Contre les coups que peut vous porter la Fortune,
Et pour fermer chez vous l'entrée à la douleur,
De vingt verres de vin entourez votre cœur."

While reading the above-cited passage from " Love for Love," we are reminded of a similar line of argument which is to be found in " Les Femmes Savantes " (Act II., Sc. 8). Chrysale says in a quarrel with his blue-stocking wife Philaminte, concerning the latter's absurd dismissal of the servant Martine :

" Vaugelas n'apprend point à bien faire un potage ;
Et Malherbe et Balzac, si savants en bons mots,
En cuisine, peut-être, auraient été des sots."

We feel convinced that Congreve had Molière's witty valets in mind when he produced the character Jeremy. The latter is just as argumentative with his master and speaks to him in tones quite as authoritative as does Mascarille to

his blundering master Lélie in "L'Etourdi," or as does Gros-René to his master Lélie in "Le Cocu Imaginaire," as is shown by the passage quoted above. Valentine, the scholar-lover, the fine gentleman who partly despises himself for being a man of sense and wit, and Tattle, the type of fatuous vanity, offer numerous traits which vividly recall Molière to our minds. In Act II. again, we have a fine display of the author's daring and coruscating wit. Here appears Foresight, the pantaloon astrologer, an illiterate old fellow, peevish and positive, superstitious and pretending to understand astrology, physiognomy, omens and dreams. He is as stupid a fool with his astrology as Trissotin shows himself to be with his pedantry. On insisting that his niece Angelica shall not go out, he lays himself open to as great an outburst of raillery as Harpagon receives in "L'Avare" in consequence of his stinginess, or as Madelon and Cathos bring down upon themselves from their enraged guardian.

The third Act of "Love for Love" is full of wit, and smart repartee. In Sc. 14 (between Scandal and Mrs. Foresight) we find reproduced that famous scene between Tartuffe and Elmire (Act III., Sc. 3, "Tartuffe"). Scandal is the tempter and his honeyed words remind us at once of the impostor in Molière's play. The fourth act of this comedy strikes us as being the nearest in style to Molière of anything hitherto surveyed. The ravings of Valentine in his madness afford excellent examples of Congreve's brilliant wit. In Scene 18, Valentine owns to Angelica that he has feigned madness for her sake: "You see what disguises love makes us put on; gods have been in counterfeited shapes for the same reason (probably Congreve here had in mind the plot of Molière's "Amphitryon"); and the divine part of me, my mind, has worn this masque of madness and this motley livery, only as the slave of love, and menial creature of your beauty."

The English dramatist was doubtless acquainted with the various devices which Molière caused certain of his characters to adopt in order to bring their love to a successful issue; for example, Valère's office of valet in the house of Harpagon and his subserviency to him in order finally to win the charming Élise, with whom he was in love. The eighteenth scene is especially in the style of Molière.

Act V., again, presents various important points of resemblance between the two dramatists. Frosine's barefaced flattery of Harpagon and Angelica's conversation with Sir Sampson Legend are remarkably similar.

In "L'Avare" (Act II., Sc. 5) occur the following two passages:

(a) "Elle veut tout au moins qu'on soit sexagénaire ; et il n'y a pas quatre mois qu'étant prête d'être mariée, elle rompit tout net le mariage, sur ce que son amant fit voir qu'il n'avait que cinquante-six ans, et qu'il ne prit point de lunettes pour signer le contrat."

(b) "Elle dit que ce n'est pas contentement pour elle que cinquante-six ans ; et surtout elle est pour les nez qui portent des lunettes."

Now let us compare these sentiments with those of Angelica in her interview with Sir Sampson Legend : "Fifty a contemptible age! Not at all ; a very fashionable age, I think—I assure you, I know very considerable beaux that set a good face upon fifty. Fifty! I have seen fifty in a side-box by candle-light, out-blossom five and twenty."

Sir Sampson Legend was as much incensed against the merits of young men as Arnolphe was, as is seen by his pleading speech to Agnès, or as Sganarelle was in the "Ecole des Maris" (Act I., Sc. 1). Harpagon, too, encouraged by Frosine, in certain speeches attacked young men in general. Sir Sampson Legend, in like manner, tries to persuade Angelica of the folly of taking a husband from their number. "Madam," says he, "you deserve a good husband, and 'twere pity you should be thrown away upon any of these young idle rogues about the town."

The first Act of Congreve's "The Way of the World" (1700), clearly reveals the influence of Molière in certain scenes and situations. The idea of Lady Wishfort receiving addresses from Mirabell, who was really in love with her niece, Millamant, was doubtless influenced by, if not directly taken from Bélise's passionate love for Clitandre in "Les Femmes Savantes." The various "lovers' quarrels" in Molière, and especially those scenes in which the man, by the aid of his valet, tries his utmost to see as many faults as possible in the object of his adoration so that he may no more be the victim of her haughtiness (Dépit Amoureux, Tartuffe, etc.), very probably influenced Congreve with regard to the conduct of Mirabell in the following scene :

"Fainall : Are you jealous as often as you see Witwould entertained by Millamant?

Mir : Of her understanding I am, if not of her person.

Fain : You do her wrong ; for, to give her her due, she has wit.

Mir : She has beauty enough to make any man think so, and complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so.

Fain : For a passionate lover, methinks you are a man somewhat discerning in the failings of your mistress.

Mir : And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover ; for I like her with all her faults —nay, like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, so artful that they become her ; and those affectations, which in another woman would be odious, serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, she once used me with that insolence, that in revenge I took her to pieces, sifted her, and separated her failings ; I studied 'em, and got 'em by rote. The catalogue was so large that I was not without hopes, one day or other, to hate her heartily ; to which end I so used myself to think of 'em, that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, they gave me every hour less disturbance ; till, in a few days, it became habitual for me to remember them without being displeased. They are now grown as familiar to me as my own frailties ; and in all probability, in a little time longer, I shall like 'em as well."

Mirabell, in this passage, seems decidedly influenced by Alceste who, in the heat of despair, exclaimed to the adorable Célimène : " C'est pour mes péchés que je t'aime." To go further back still, it is almost certain that Molière in his " Misanthrope " was pondering over his own personal state of conjugal infelicity. Congreve may even have had in mind the celebrated conversation which is said to have taken place between Molière and his friend Chapelle. Act II. of " The Way of the World," where Mirabell gets in a short, though only a short conversation with Mrs. Millamant most certainly owes its origin to Molière's characters, Alceste and Célimène. (e.g., Act II., Sc. 1, of " Le Misanthrope ").

The following is the scene to which we refer :

Mirabell : I would beg a little private audience, too. You had the tyranny to deny me last night ; though you know I came to impart a secret to you that concerned my love.

Mrs. Mill : You saw I was engaged.

Mir : Unkind. You had the leisure to entertain a herd of fools ; things who visit you from their excessive idleness ; bestowing on your easiness that time which is the encumbrance of their lives. How can you find delight in such society? It is impossible they should admire you, they are not capable ; or if they

were, it should be to you a mortification ; for, sure, to please a fool is some degree of folly.

Mrs. Mill : I please myself. Besides, something to converse with fools is for my health.

Mir : Your health ! Is there a worse disease than the conversation of fools.

Mrs. Mill : Yes, the vapours ; fools are physic for it, next to " asafœtida."

Mir : You are not in a course of fools.

Mrs. Mill : Mirabell, if you persist in this offensive freedom, you'll displease me. I think I must resolve after all not to have you. We shan't agree.

Mir : Not in our physic, it may be.

Mrs. Mill : And yet our distemper, in all likelihood, will be the same, for we shall be sick of one another. I shan't endure to be reprimanded nor instructed ; 'tis so dull to act always by advice, and so tedious to be told of one's faults, I can't bear it. Well, I won't have you, Mirabell—I'm resolved—I think—you may go. Ha, ha, ha ! What would you give that you could help loving me?

Mir : I would give something that you did not know I could not help it.

Mrs. Mill : Come, don't look grave, then. Well, what do you say to me?

Mir : I say that a man may as soon make a friend by his wit, or a fortune by his honesty, as win a woman with plain dealing and sincerity."

The French expressions are deserving of notice in one of Mrs. Millamant's speeches in Act IV. : " Ah, adieu, my morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, ye douceurs, ye sommeils du matin, adieu ! "

The arrangements previous to marriage discussed between Mirabell and Mrs. Millamant derive their origin doubtless from Arnolphe's " Maxims of Wedlock " to his ward Agnès. Thirdly, Waitwell's acting the rôle of Sir Rowland seems an echo of Mascarille's attitude in " Les Précieuses Ridicules," where he converses so plausibly and so learnedly with the conceited ladies.

The fifth Act contains three main points of resemblance which shall be dealt with individually. (a) Let us compare the following words of Lady Wishfort to Foible with a passage in " Tartuffe " :

"Go, go, drive a trade. These were your commodities, you treacherous trull! This was the merchandise you dealt in when I took you into my house, placed you next myself, and made you gouvernante of my whole family. You have forgotten this, have you, now you have feathered your nest?"

This passage seems to us to resemble very closely Tartuffe's condition before Orgon befriended him by taking him into his house, and Tartuffe's subsequent flagrant ingratitude and deceit. When Orgon ordered him out of his house, the hypocrite audaciously retorted: "C'est à vous d'en sortir, vous qui parlez en maître."

(Tartuffe, Act IV., Sc. 7).

(b) Lady Wishfort's intention "to retire to deserts and solitudes, and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams" is reminiscent of Alceste in his disgust:

"Trahi de toutes parts, accablé d'injustices,
Je vais sortir d'un gouffre où triomphent les vices;
Et chercher sur la terre un endroit écarté,
Où d'être homme d'honneur on ait la liberté."

(Misanthrope, Act V., Sc. 4).

(c) Lady Wishfort's method of training her daughter reminds us of the educational system of restraint adopted in the case of both Agnès and Isabelle in the two "Ecoles":

"I promise you her education has been very unexceptionable—I may say it—for I chiefly made it my own care to initiate her very infancy in the rudiments of virtue, and to impress upon her tender years a young odium and aversion to the very sight of men; ay, friend, she would ha' shrieked if she had but seen a man, till she was in her teens. As I'm a person, 'tis true. She was never suffered to play with a male child, though but in coats; nay, her very babies were of the feminine gender. Oh, she never looked a man in the face, but her own father or the chaplain; and him we made a shift to put upon her for a woman, by the help of his long garments and his sleek face, till she was going in her fifteen."

This comedy of Congreve approaches more nearly to the excellence of Molière than any other piece in our language. In general, his works do not reveal that depth and penetration which are characteristic of the French master. There is, however, in the character of Lady Wishfort and her unvenerable old age something not far remote from Arnolphe, whose experiences amuse us, but yet, at times, arouse our pity and condolence.

A few words concerning Congreve's wit as compared with that of Molière may not be out of place before we proceed to the work of the next writer. Congreve has, so to speak, laid himself out for wit, and has carried it to such an extent that his dialogue has suffered in consequence ; the thread of his dialogue is frequently lost in the onset of witty attacks and witty repartees in which his characters indulge. He absolutely squeezes the whole of the latent wit out of a word or a phrase, and does not rest content until he has done so. His work shows him to be skilled in every species of wit, his playing upon words, his witty phraseology, and his witty similes are surprisingly executed. Molière's wit, on the other hand, is in no degree strained ; it is not a wit of words or of phraseology, but is such as can be conceived as being produced in actual life. He has clearly explained what he thinks wit should be, by a well-directed thrust in the " Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes " : " L'auteur n'a pas mis cela pour être de soi un bon mot, mais seulement pour une chose qui caractérise l'homme." In ordinary conversation there are but few people who are capable of cleverly keeping the ball of wit rolling without any hesitation on their part ; we frequently hear men remark after the event that they wish they had said so and so, but their witty vein was not present to help them at the convenient moment. Molière knew this well enough and did not overdo the witty dialogues at the risk of becoming untrue to nature. Molière, unlike Congreve and the majority of the other comic dramatists of this period, was himself an actor ; this makes a vast difference in a writer's idea of the essential characteristics of dramatic work, and, as it seems to us, the department of comedy especially stands in need of the joint skill of the writer and the actor. Molière thus knew exactly how far to proceed with his wit, what prominence to give to it, and how to assign to it its true place among the other branches of the dramatic art. Thus do we feel quite justified in according to Molière a higher position than to Congreve in the domain of wit. " Ce qui fait la supériorité de Molière," says Francisque Sarcey in speaking of " Les Précieuses Ridicules" (Vol. II. of "Quarante ans de Théâtre"), "c'est que la préciosité dont il se moque, la préciosité du dix-septième siècle, ne s'exerçait pas seulement sur le langage, mais encore sur les pensées. On les voulait aussi délicates, aussi raffinées, aussi subtiles que les mots et les tournures. Or, le comique des pensées est aussi solide et durable que le comique des mots est caduc et passager." In the preface to the English edition of Molière of 1732, we find the following criticism which exactly describes Molière's attitude towards the department of wit : " He is never witty merely

for the sake of being so, but labours more to keep up attention to an audience, than to raise a clap, and to make his characters speak pertinently than finely. He never makes any one talk *more* or *less*, more witty or more ludicrous than what is just and becoming. His men of wit are always men of common sense, and he plays the fool with a world of understanding." It must be pointed out, however, that Congreve himself was not unaware of the dangers incident to a superabundance of wit, and of the ill effect it would necessarily have on the clear distinction of the various characters from each other, a point so essential to comedy of the first order, although he cannot be said to have applied his principles faithfully in actual practice. We refer to his letter to John Dennis ("Concerning Humour in Comedy," dated July 10th, 1695—in "Select Works of John Dennis," ii., 514). Congreve has there expressed himself as follows: "Wit is often mistaken for humour; the saying of humorous things does not distinguish characters; for every person in a comedy may be allowed to speak them. From a witty man they are expected; and even a fool may be permitted to stumble on 'em by chance. Tho' I make a difference betwixt wit and humour, yet I do not think that humorous characters exclude wit: no, but the manner of wit should be adapted to the humour."

The next dramatist of this class is Captain John Vanbrugh (1672-1726); an investigation of his comedies will show him to have been supplied with an inexhaustible source of materials by Molière and his contemporaries, the most notable among the latter being Dancourt and Boursault. On the whole, however, he cannot be accused of having slavishly copied them. The liveliness, the cheerfulness, the ease of his prose dialogue are remarkable, and reveal the author's own genius; with him the dialogue is so natural that we can almost imagine that the various points and witticisms are of the actors' own invention and have not been previously thought out and written down by an author. It is the secret of successful writing for the stage that the dialogue, no matter how witty, should seem as if it had never been written at all. This characteristic is entirely that of Vanbrugh who herein differs from Congreve; the latter's works show that everything has been laboriously thought out, a fact which is revealed by the performance of them. Let us see what experiences Vanbrugh had in France; his first one was unpleasant, namely, an imprisonment in the Bastille; this incident has been denied by Disraeli (Notes and Queries, Second Series, Vol. I., p. 117), but the truth of it is substantiated by the following passages from Narcissus Luttrell's Diary: "Thursday, 11th of Febru-

ary (1691-2). Last letters from France say, three Englishmen, Mr. Vanbrook, Mr. Goddard, and Mr. North, were clapt up in the Bastile suspected to be spyes." Further on there is another note dated Tuesday, 15th March: "French merchants were the other day sent to the Tower, to be used as Mr. North and Mr. Vanbroke are in the Bastile."

We learn from Voltaire (Letters on the English Nation) that Vanbrugh, thus being shut up in the Bastille, was ignorant of the reason of his confinement for some considerable time. He was, notwithstanding this, never inclined to give way to despondency; his natural gaiety of temperament was always uppermost. It was during this imprisonment that our author composed, or rather roughly planned out, the scenes of "The Provok'd Wife," which comedy he subsequently completed. The received opinion is that he owed his release to the kindness of some French gentlemen who were delighted with his wit, and who, having thus formed a favourable opinion of him, used their influence with the king to effect his liberation. Vanbrugh's earliest comedy proved a great success. A study of this gay and lively comedy entitled "The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger" (1697) shows that in two instances the dramatist has borrowed from Molière. In the first place, Act I., Sc. 3, of "The Relapse" is clearly modelled on Act II., Scene 5, of "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" (1670). Here are the two scenes in question:

(a) Molière:

M. Jourdain: Vous m'avez aussi fait faire des souliers qui me blessent furieusement.

Maitre Tailleur: Point du tout, Monsieur.

M. Jourdain: Comment point du tout?

Maitre Tailleur: Non, ils ne vous blessent point.

M. Jourdain: Je vous dis qu'ils me blessent, moi.

Maitre Tailleur: Vous vous imaginez cela.

M. Jourdain: Je me l'imagine parce que je le sens. Voyez la belle raison. (Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Act II., Sc. 5).

(b) Vanbrugh:

Lord Foppington: Hark thee, shoemaker! these shoes an't ugly, but they don't fit me.

Shoemaker: My lord, methinks they fit you very well.

Lord Foppington: They hurt me just below the instep.

Shoemaker: My lord, they don't hurt you there.

Lord Foppington: I tell thee, they pinch me execrably.

Shoemaker: My lord, if they pinch you, I'll be bound to be hanged, that's all.

Lord Foppington: Why, wilt thou undertake to persuade me I cannot feel?

Shoemaker : Your lordship may please to feel what you think fit ; but that shoe does not hurt you ; I think I understand my trade.

Lord Foppington : Now by all that's great and powerful, thou art an incomprehensible coxcomb. But thou makest good shoes, and so I'll bear with thee.

Shoemaker : My lord, I have worked for half the people of quality in town these twenty years ; and 'twere very hard I should not know when a shoe hurts, and when it don't.

Lord Foppington : Well, prithee begone about thy business, (Vanbrugh "The Relapse," Act I., Sc. 3).

It is not too much to say that Vanbrugh has here distinctly heightened the comic situation. It is interesting, too, to note that Lord Foppington reminds his page to address him as "My Lord" instead of "Sir." (Act I., Sc. 3). This was doubtless suggested by the incident of "Le Garçon Tailleur" in Molière's play addressing Monsieur Jourdain as "Mon Gentilhomme."

The other point worthy of note is a little speech in Act V., Scene 4, of the English comedy, made by Bull, the chaplain : "Well, Sir, if it must be so, I shan't contend. What Providence orders, I submit to." The general tone of Bull's remarks, and this speech in particular, show him to be without the slightest doubt a lineal descendant of Tartuffe.

In this same year 1697, Vanbrugh produced another good comedy "The Provoked Wife." In the first Act we notice that Molière's subject of conjugal infelicity is again dealt with in the wordy arguments which pass between Sir John and Lady Brute. Furthermore, the author's thorough acquaintance with French and French of the Molièresque style is well illustrated by the lively conversation (partly in French) which takes place between Mademoiselle, the French maid, and her mistress, Lady Fancyful ; the following passage will illustrate this point : "Voilà votre écharpe, voilà votre coiffe, voilà votre masque, voilà tout. Hé, Mercure, coquin ! Call one chair for Matam, and one oder for me, va t'en vite. Allons, matam ; dépêchez-vous donc. Mon Dieu, quels scrupules !"

The second act contains certain sayings and situations which vividly recall Molière. Lady Fancyful's utter self-conceit is only to be equalled by that of Madelon and Cathos in "Les Précieuses Ridicules." Secondly, the following speech of Heartfree reminds us of the poor reception of

Oronte's lyric poetry at the hands of Alceste in the "Misanthrope," and also of "Les Femmes Savantes" (Act III., Sc. 5) where Vadius is finally snubbed by Trissotin: "'Tis as hard to persuade a woman to quit anything that makes her ridiculous, as 'tis to prevail with a poet to see a fault in his own play."

In Act III., Sc. 1., the conversation which is held between Constant and Lady Brute recalls to our minds Elmire's talk with Tartuffe, but with this difference, that the former conversation was not overheard by the husband, whereas in the latter case, the husband, concealed beneath the table, was attentively listening. In Act IV., Scene 3, another tête-à-tête between Constant and Lady Brute reminds us even more forcibly of the scene in Molière between Elmire and Tartuffe. We will deal separately with several direct reminders of Molière which occurs in Act V.:

(a) In Scene 3 Lady Fancyful suggests to Mademoiselle:

"And if you find him stubborn, Mademoiselle, hark you, don't refuse him a few little reasonable liberties, to put him into humour."

The occasion of Toinette promising Angélique (the daughter of the hypochondriac) to persuade her lover, by means of a little extra coaxing to act in the girl's interest, is the scene which Vanbrugh probably had in mind. (1)

(b) In Scene 5, where Lady Fancyful, masked, pretends to be the wife of Heartfree and so tries to prevent the marriage, we are reminded of the pretences made by the two women to be the wives of Pourceaugnac, and the noisy protestations which they make in the declaration of their claims. The making believe that a person is morally bad, as Heartfree is persuaded, is a situation which occurs at least twice in Molière's comedies, namely, in "L'Etourdi" and "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac."

(c) Belinda's remark: "It must feel very strange to go to bed to a man" was probably suggested by the first scene of "Les Précieuses Ridicules," where Cathos disdainfully says to Gorgibus: "Comment est-ce qu'on peut souffrir la pensée de coucher contre un homme vraiment nu?"

We are wrongly informed by Genest (2) that "The False Friend" (1702) is based on the comedy by Dancourt entitled "La Trahison Punie"; the latter piece was represented for the first time on November 27th, 1707; these dates at once render Genest's theory false. Dancourt's comedy is borrowed from a Spanish original, a comedy

(1) The scene in "Le Malade Imaginaire" to which we refer is the tenth scene of Act I. Toinette says: "Je n'ai personne à employer à cet office, que le vieux usurier Polichinelle, mon amant; il m'en coûtera pour cela quelques paroles de douceur, que je veux bien dépenser pour vous."

(2) Genest: "English Stage."

entitled "La traicion busca el Castigo," which was published at Madrid in 1640; it was written by Don Francisco de Rojas y Zorrilla, a well-known Spanish dramatist. Now Vanbrugh himself may have known this Spanish comedy, but internal evidence proves that "The False Friend" is not taken directly from the Spanish play. The above-named Spanish piece was translated into French by Le Sage in 1700, thus appearing two years before Vanbrugh's comedy was produced before the English public. (1) It was the Abbé de Lyonne who first suggested to Le Sage that he should direct his attention to the literature of Spain, and the French writer adopted this suggestion with all the more enthusiasm inasmuch as he thereby acquired a small annuity. He translated the "New Don Quixote" of Avallaneda and freely adapted not only from Rojas but also from Lope de Vega and Calderon. Le Sage's translation from Rojas was entitled "Le Traître Puni"; the dialogue is in parts conspicuously altered from the original, while in some cases it has been abbreviated. Le Sage, moreover, had added a new character, namely that of Galindo, Don Garcie's servant. A comparison of the two plays will convince us that it is from Le Sage's version that Vanbrugh has translated. "The False Friend," a comedy of intrigue, is said to have been a success, although it does not seem to have been often represented.

Vanbrugh's "The Confederacy," first produced on October 30th, 1705, is translated from Dancourt's comedy "Les Bourgeoises à la Mode," which was first represented on November 15th, 1692. Both plays consist of five acts, and both are written in prose. Dancourt's piece is remarkable for its wit, and is very well constructed. Vanbrugh who, with the exception of three scenes of his own invention, has closely followed the French piece, has of course altered the scene from Paris to London, at the same time changing the names of the characters. He has faithfully reproduced, not merely the framework of the plot, but has even rendered the details of the dialogue with exactness. It may, however, be confidently stated that Vanbrugh has in every respect made great improvement upon the French comedy. So many witty and humorous touches have been added by him that we can regard Dancourt's piece, itself very good, as now mainly owing its literary value to the successful and excellent English comedy to which it has given rise. "The Confederacy," as a whole, is certainly the masterpiece of Vanbrugh, although some of the scenes in "The Relapse" may be more brilliant comedy. The three scenes to which we

(1) Saintsbury: "A Short History of French Literature" (Page 389).

have alluded as being of Vanbrugh's own invention are (a) the first scene in the play between Mrs. Amlet and Mrs. Cloggitt ; (b) Act III., Sc. 1, between Dick Amlet and his mother ; (c) Act V., Sc. 2, as far as the entrance of the goldsmith. Richard Estcourt, in April, 1703, had, before Vanbrugh, borrowed a comedy "The Fair Example" or "The Modish Citizens" from Dancourt's "Les Bourgeoises à la Mode." Estcourt's piece was produced at Drury Lane, but it was not until 1706 that it was published. In the ironical dedication to Manager Rich which precedes "The Fair Example," Estcourt makes an allusion to Vanbrugh's "The Confederacy," at the same time affirming that his own piece appeared first. A comparison of the two English pieces shows that Vanbrugh was not in any way influenced by Estcourt ; the two pieces are quite unlike each other and Vanbrugh may not even have been acquainted with "The Fair Example." Estcourt himself, moreover, does not lead us to infer that Vanbrugh was at all indebted to him. The former has borrowed from "Les Bourgeoises à la Mode" the idea of his two citizens, Whimsey and Symons, who make love to each other's wife. From Dancourt, moreover, he has taken the character of a gentleman adventurer who, in the last scene, is discovered to be the son of Mrs. Furnish, the milliner. The details, however, of Estcourt's piece do not in any degree resemble those of Dancourt, and in the more serious portion of its fable, "The Fair Example" does not present any resemblance whatever to "Les Bourgeoises à la Mode." It is interesting to notice those points for which both Dancourt and Vanbrugh were probably indebted to Molière himself. In Act I., Sc. 3, of "The Confederacy," Clarissa's conceit seems to have been modelled on that of the "Précieuses Ridicules." She says to her maid : "Alas ! I have more subjects for spleen than one. Is it not a most horrible thing that I should be but a scrivener's wife? Come, don't flatter me, don't you think nature design'd me for something *plus élevé*?" Again, in Act II., Sc. 1, of Vanbrugh's comedy Corinna (daughter to Gripe by a former wife) is as much concerned about her lack of freedom as are Isabelle and Agnès : "Why, is it not a miserable thing, such a young creature as I am should be kept in perpetual solitude, with no other company but a parcel of old fumbling masters, to teach me geography, arithmetic, philosophy, and a thousand useless things? Fine entertainments, indeed, for a young maid of sixteen ! Methinks one's time might be better employed." Further on, in the same scene, the theme is continued :

"Oh, but you thought wrong, Flippanta. What, because I don't go a visiting, and see the world, you think I know

nothing? But you should consider, Flippanta, that the more one's alone, the more one thinks; and 'tis thinking that improves a girl. I'll have you to know, when I was younger than I am now, by more than I'll boast of, I thought of things would have made you stare again."

Agnès felt pained at the thought that she had unwittingly wounded Horace. Corinna, in like manner, says: "Lord, I would not have my hands in blood for thousands."

Flippanta's smart but pert way of arguing with her master reminds us of Toinette's style of address to Argan in "Le Malade Imaginaire." Lastly, in Act V., Scene 2, of "The Confederacy," Mrs. Amlet's indignant reproaches to her son Dick remind us forcibly of the babbling women who assailed Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. Mrs. Amlet, however, had truth on her side, whereas Pourceaugnac's aggressors were rank impostors: "Speak rogue, am I not thy mother? Ha! Did I not bring thee forth? Say then!"

Throughout Act I. of "The Mistake" (1705) Vanbrugh follows the first Act of "Le Dépit Amoureux" of Molière very closely indeed. This latter is one of the earliest comedies of Molière, first produced at Béziers in 1656, at Paris in 1658, and published in 1663.

(1) Don Carlos is as suspicious of his servant Sancho's loyalty towards him as Eraste is of that of Gros-René. The two men defend themselves against the charge in similar language; Sancho says: "Men of my fabric don't use to be suspected for knaves," and Gros-René proudly affirms: "Les gens de mon minois ne sont point accusés d'être, grâces à Dieu, ni fourbes ni rusés." Sancho fails to see why his master should be so uneasy about Leonora, and Gros-René asserts his inability to understand Eraste's anxiety concerning Lucile. Sancho has this answer from Don Carlos: "He that's the civilest received is often the least cared for," while Eraste brings forward before his valet the similar convincing argument: "Le mieux reçu n'est pas toujours le mieux chéri."

Don Carlos' mind is further disturbed by the coolness and indifference shown by his rival Don Lorenzo concerning the Lady Leonora; the same uneasiness besets Eraste, who feels perturbed by the cool manner of his rival, Valère. Both men would prefer to see more signs of open jealousy on the part of their rivals; they regard it as an evil omen that their rivals show so little excitement. The words of Don Carlos are these: "He's too calm; his heart's too much at ease to leave me mine at rest." Gros-René and Sancho try to console their masters who, however, refuse to be comforted. They point out that although not such pro-

found philosophers as their masters, they always make themselves easier in mind than they, inasmuch as they always believe what they see without further ado :

Gros-René : " Ce que voyent mes yeux franchement je m'y fie."

Sancho : " But what I see—that I generally believe."

Marinette (Lucile's waiting-woman) is more polite to her admirer Gros-René, than is Jacinta (Leonora's maid) to Sancho, while Sancho's remarks are infinitely coarser than those of Gros-René. The servant-maids both bring letters to their mistresses' lovers, at the same time threatening to keep them from seeing them if they persist in their anxious speeches of foolish jealousy. The letter which Jacinta brings is modelled on that of Marinette and both lords in their great joy re-read the last part of their epistle. Marinette gives Eraste a straight hint about a ring which he had previously promised to her, and Eraste replies by giving her the ring which he had on his own finger. Don Carlos, however, is not nearly so reluctant in giving his ring, watch, and purse to Jacinta as a reward for the good news of which she was the bearer. Moreover, during these transactions, Gros-René has sufficient good taste to make no interference, but Sancho suggests : " You can't carry 'em all, I believe ; shall I ease thee of this?" Probably Vanbrugh had in his thoughts Act II., Sc. 4, of " George Dandin," where Clitandre, Angélique's suitor, is represented as giving to the housemaid (Claudine) a substantial acknowledgment of his indebtedness to her. Lubin, who stood by, exclaimed : " Puisque nous serons mariés, donne-moi cela que je le mette avec le mien." Claudine refuses with the prompt reply : " Je te le garde aussi bien que le baiser."

Just as in Molière's play a conversation takes place between the rivals Eraste and Valère, so too in " The Mistake," Don Carlos and Don Lorenzo talk together. Both Valère and Don Lorenzo show a marvellous coolness throughout this scene ; neither of them seems in the least disturbed in mind after perusing the rivals' letters which they had received from Lucile and Leonora. In the English comedy Lopez occupies the place of Mascarille. In " Le Dépit Amoureux " Eraste sounds Mascarille, while in the English play Don Carlos submits Lopez to an examination. The two masters begin by informing their rivals' servants that there is no more need for an estrangement to exist between them and their masters :

(a) Eraste : " Touche, nous n'avons plus sujet de jalousie.
Nous devenons amis, et mes feux que j'éteins
Laissent la place libre à vos heureux desseins."

(b) Don Carlos : " You need not be shy of me any more, thy master and I are no longer rivals ; I have yielded up the cause, so I submit."

Simultaneously with their masters, Gros-René and Sancho likewise openly renounce their love for Marinette and Jacinta respectively :

(a) Gros-Rene : Je te cède aussi la Marinette.

(b) Sancho : I give thee up Jacinta.

When the servants have told more to their masters than is agreeable to their ears, they give vent to their passion in similar terms. Lopez' words as to his master's relations with Leonora are not free from censure, while Mascarille merely informs Eraste that Valère has married Lucile secretly. Both men are equally roused and hurriedly dismiss the bearers of these ill tidings in great rage.

Marinette and Jacinta, the waiting-women in the two plays, put in a second appearance but meet with a very poor reception :

(a) Gros-Rene : " M'oses-tu bien encore parler, femelle inique, crocodile trompeur?

(b) Sancho : And durst thou ask me any questions, smooth-faced iniquity, crocodile of Nile?"

(2). Act II., both in the French and English comedies, follows precisely the same course. Ascagne and Camillo play similar parts in the French and English plays respectively. It may be said without hesitation that Camillo is a worthy representative of Ascagne, and that in no single instance does she disgrace the French original. Here are two quotations to illustrate how closely Vanbrugh has followed Molière :

(a) " Sachez donc que l'amour ne sait point s'abuser ;
Que mon sexe à ses yeux n'a pu se déguiser,
Et que ses traits subtils, sous l'habit que je porte
Ont su trouver le cœur d'une fille peu forte.
J'aime enfin."

(b) " Know then that though Cupid is blind, he is not to be deceived : I can hide my sex from the world, but not from him ; his dart has found the way through the manly garb I wear to pierce a virgin's heart : I love."

Frosine, Ascagne's confidential friend, is the original of Isabella who performs the same duties to Camillo. Of these two characters Frosine is better than Isabella ; the latter goes out of her way to be blasphemous whereas Frosine is free from censure on this point :

(a) Frosine : " Son trépas imprévu ne put rien découvrir."

(b) Isabella: "The suddenness of her exit to t'other world, which did not give her even time to call heaven's mercy on her."

The following passages, however, show how closely Vanbrugh usually follows the wording and thoughts of Molière:

(a) Frosine: "Ah, vous avez raison,
L'objet de votre amour, lui, dont à la maison
Votre imposture enlève un puissant héritage,
Et qui de votre sexe ayant le moindre ombrage
Verroit incontinent de bien lui retourner!
C'est encore un plus grand sujet de s'étonner."

(b) Isabella: "Lorenzo! Most nicely hit! The very man from whom your imposture keeps this vast estate; and who, on the first knowledge of your being a woman, would enter into possession of it. This is indeed a wonder."

It is interesting to observe how Terence, Molière, and Vanbrugh form a direct succession of channels for the speech which begins thus in Molière:

"En quel gouffre de soins et de perplexité
Nous jette une action faite sans équité."

Thus in Vanbrugh:

"Sure nothing in this world is worth a troubled mind!
What racks has avarice stretched me on!"

The original is to be found in the first scene of the "Adelphi" of Terence.

The scene between Don Alvarez and the pedant Metaphrastus is well nigh an exact reproduction of that between Albert and Métaphraste, e.g.:

Metaphraste: "Maître est dit *a magis ter.*
C'est comme qui dirait trois fois plus grand."

Metaphrastus: "The title master comes from *magis,* and *ter,* which is as much as to say *thrice worthy.*

This etymology is borrowed by Molière from an Italian comedy by Bruno Nolano, entitled "Le Pédant," so that here again is an instance of an influence in three successive stages.

The scene between Lucile and Marinette and the parallel one in Vanbrugh between Leonora and Jacinta show that the English author has made the maidservant coarser in speech and more extravagant in manner than Molière intended his character to be. Jacinta, as observed in Act I., is much more inclined to be rude than is Marinette, and Vanbrugh seems to have exaggerated the part belonging to the maidservant. Let us compare these two parallel passages and observe the refinement in the French version and also the want of refinement in the English passage :

Marinette : " Vraiment n'ayez pas peur ; et laissez faire à nous ;
J'ai pour le moins autant de colère que vous ;
Et je serais plutôt fille toute ma vie
Que mon gros traître aussi me redonnât envie."

Jacinta : " Madam, never doubt me ; I'm charged to the mouth with fury, and if ever I meet that fat traitor of mine such a volley will I pour about his ears ! Now Heaven prevent all hasty vows ; but in the humour I am, methinks I'd carry my maidenhead to my cold grave with me, before I'd let it simper at the rascal."

The scene between Don Lorenzo and Camillo is almost exactly reproduced from that between Valère and Ascagne in the French comedy.

(3). Turning to Act III. of the two comedies in question we find that Vanbrugh, who has followed Molière closely in the greater part of the act, has, however, prolonged a few of the scenes, and that he has made several coarse allusions and used several vulgarisms which were not in the original French and which could have been omitted without much loss to the adapter. In general, however, Vanbrugh's imitation is not unworthy of the original. While on the subject of this act it may be well to point out that " Le Dépit Amoureux " is marred by a lack of clearness ; also that the accounts given, the only purpose of which is to explain the subject, become most wearisome to the reader, while the fact that these accounts and descriptions continue to the last act shows convincingly that Molière himself felt how ill the subject had been expounded. It may be said in support of the French dramatist that, had he not been hampered by the use of the monotonous Alexandrine and had written the comedy in prose, both these defects, lack of clearness and monotony, would have been avoided. Were it not that Vanbrugh had interspersed his adaptation with suggestive remarks of an objectionable kind, it might be

said that Molière's long-winded descriptions of intrigues and plots had become more interesting and more easy to follow in the English adaptation. As it is, the same fault, only in a lesser degree, which William Wycherley had, possessed Vanbrugh, namely, that occasionally he pandered to the low tastes of the vulgar, so that it seems unjust to Molière whose whole comic drama (except in a very few instances which are, under the special circumstances, almost pardonable) was characterised by purity, and whose characters were remarkable for their integrity, to assert that Vanbrugh has made any marked improvement upon Molière.

To return to the subject of "Le Dépit Amoureux," the two defects noted do not in any wise condemn Molière's play as a poor production; the beauties of the work in a great measure make up for the weaknesses. The scene between the two old men who are mutually in fear of each other—Albert because he thinks Polidore has learnt the secret that by a foul imposture an estate is being kept from him—Polidore because he has learnt that his son Valère has secretly married Albert's daughter Lucile, and because he expects to be the recipient of Albert's wrath and indignation on that account—this scene, then, is worthy of Molière's finest work. So also is that wherein Lucile is accused of this secret marriage in her father's presence, and that wherein Lucile and Eraste get angry with each other only finally to be reconciled again. Speaking of the latter, M. Auger said that he always enthusiastically admired "Cette admirable scène de brouillerie et de raccommodement, délicieuse image d'une nature charmante que Molière a reproduite plusieurs fois sans la surpasser et qu'on a mille fois répétée d'après lui sans l'égaler jamais."

The only new character which this act contains is that of Polidore, the father of Valère. Vanbrugh's corresponding character is Don Felix, father of Don Lorenzo. To show the close following of Molière on the part of the adapter the following short parallel passages will serve:

Don Felix: "The news may well surprise you, 'tis what I have been far from apprehending."

Polidore: "La nouvelle a droit de vous surprendre,
Et je n'eusse pas cru ce que je viens d'apprendre."

It may be interesting, before proceeding to the next Act, to point out that the Italian comedy "L'Interesse" by Niccolo Secchi supplied Molière with material for the scene between the two old men, although the idea of causing each man to make humble apologies to the other, and each to kneel before the other, is entirely Molièresque in origin.

Thus in a direct sequence did the Italian comedy, through the works of Niccolo Secchi, Molière, and Vanbrugh, influence France and England successively.

(4). The first scene of Act IV. is not so long in Vanbrugh as in Molière, while the second departs from the original in more than one instance. For example, the master Eraste hears all Gros-René has to say about his own love Marinette, and makes no comment, whereas Don Carlos goes out of his way to inquire specially about Jacinta's reception and treatment of his valet. Vanbrugh's work cannot be denied to show great briskness and plenty of action, and occasionally there seems to be a homelier humour than in the French version. On the other hand how unwarranted by Molière is that disgraceful outburst of bombast by Don Carlos on several occasions in this Act! e.g.:

> "Yet once more before I go (lest you should doubt my resolution) may I starve, perish, rot, be blasted, dead, damned, or any other thing that men or gods can think on, if, on any occasion whatever, civil or military, pleasure or business, love or hate, or any other accident of life, I, from this moment change one word or look with you."

In vain too do we search the French version to find any original for that piece of vulgar gallery-play where Sancho pulls a pack of dirty cards out of his pocket and throws them at Jacinta, and where he audaciously pulls off her head-clothes while she retaliates by snatching off his wig. We find hardly anything even approaching the vulgar in Molière in this act; on the contrary, especially in the scene between Eraste and Lucile, the dramatist has produced a most beautiful specimen of his finest work. Perhaps by these vulgar touches Vanbrugh imagined that he was improving upon Molière, whereas really he was seriously defacing a most charming scene. The English adapter was not content to leave well alone; he has exaggerated and overdone the happy hits of Molière and consequently has spoilt the effect. The translation in this Act is not so close as in the first three, and with the exception of a few occasional homelier touches, we may say that what Molière has expressed in graceful rime has been rendered by Vanbrugh in far less dignified prose. The following two parallel passages taken from this Act show that Molière was always the model:

Don Carlos: "For my part, I never yet could bear a slight from anything, nor will I now. There's but one way, however, to resent it from a woman; and that's to drive her bravely from your heart, and place a worthier in her vacant throne."

Eraste : " Pour moi, sur toute chose, un mépris me surprend,
Et, pour punir le sien par un autre aussi grand,
Je veux mettre en mon cœur une nouvelle flamme."

(5). In reading the first scene of Act V. in the two plays we observe two things of interest : in the first place, the monologue of Mascarille is an imitation of " L'Interesse," and also that the same ideas recur in " Le Cocu Imaginaire " (Scene 17) in Sganarelle's soliloquy wherein he is meditating vengeance. Vanbrugh was doubtless acquainted with this scene and knew that Molière was accustomed frequently to reproduce a scene or to repeat a situation.

Mascarille's cowardice is more wittily depicted than is that of Lopez. To Mascarille, feigning a bad cough, his master replies without hesitation :
" Ce mal te passera, prends du jus de réglisse." Lopez' feint is met by the commonplace remark : " I have greater ventures than that to take my chance for, and can't dispense with your attendance, sir."

Molière greatly increases the comic situation towards the end of this Act in a way which Vanbrugh entirely disregards. After the mystery has been finally solved, and all things are explained, and everybody is satisfied, Eraste interests himself so far as to ask which of the two valets will have Marinette, hinting that a duel would be the best and quickest way to decide. Mascarille, who has before given indications of a cowardly nature, on seeing a prospect of bloodshed, at once backs out of the contest and resigns the maid to Gros-René; then follows an amusing conversation between the trio, Marinette, Mascarille, and Gros-René. Vanbrugh, on the contrary, gives no information as to how Sancho and Lopez come to terms on the subject of Jacinta. The gradual throwing of light upon this dark mystery is beautifully effected by Molière, and, in general, Vanbrugh has well reproduced the excellent effect. The only serious objection is one referred to in the last Act, namely, the unnecessary rant which the English adapter has here and there caused several of his characters to utter ; thus Lorenzo's imprecation : " I imprecate the utmost powers of Heaven, to shower upon my head the deadliest of its wrath ; I ask that all hell's torments may unite to round my soul with one eternal anguish, if wicked Leonora ben't my wife." This speech is an unwarranted exaggeration of the original.

Our intention in having dwelt on the above adaptation at such great length has been to investigate thoroughly the English dramatist's method of copying from the French, how

far he has followed his original literally, and to what extent he has added matter of his own. The above plan may be taken as typical of his method of procedure in the case of his other adaptations. We will now dismiss more briefly the remaining pieces of Vanbrugh which show French influence.

"The Country House," which is supposed to have been produced between 1697 and 1703, was represented for the first time, apparently, in 1705, and published without the author's name in 1715. This farce is a translation of "La Maison de Campagne," a comedy by Dancourt, first acted in 1688. The French comedy contains but one Act, while Vanbrugh his written two separate Acts. The English translator has not shown himself too much the slave of the letter, although he has nowhere wandered far from the sense of the original. An important point to notice is that Vanbrugh is inclined to dwell too much on and to exaggerate any traces of vulgarity which exist in the French. What in Dancourt is merely wit has become almost irreverence in Vanbrugh. There is nothing, for instance, to warrant Mr. Bernard's tirade (Act I., Sc. 5) against the abbot who was so unwelcome a guest: "I wish his church was in his belly, that his guts might be half full before he came." Setting lack of refinement aside, it must be acknowledged that Vanbrugh has given more "vis comica" to the utterings of his various characters than Dancourt has done. Another point of importance is the way in which Molière has on more than one occasion supplied Dancourt with ideas, and how these ideas have been embodied in Vanbrugh's comedy. Dancourt was an ardent admirer of Molière, whom he regarded as a model; this he was able to do more easily than if he had been of equal age with the master, as he was but twelve years old when Molière died. Those scenes in Molière which deal with middle-class society especially influenced Dancourt; it is the peculiarity of the latter's comedies that they deal well-nigh wholly with the *bourgeoisie*.

There are two other pieces by Vanbrugh known to be of French extraction. "Æsop" (acted at Drury Lane in January, 1697) is translated from a French comedy, "Les Fables d'Esope," by Boursault (1638-1701). It is interesting to read Vanbrugh's own words concerning the French play and his own indebtedness to it: "This play (or one not much unlike it) was writ in French about six years since by one Monsieur Boursaut; it was played at Paris by the French comedians, and this was its fate. The first day it appeared it was routed (People seldom being fond of what they do not understand, their own sweet persons excepted). The second (by the help of some bold knights-errant) it rallied; the third it advanced; the fourth it gave a vigorous attack; and

the fifth put all the feathers in town to the scamper, pursuing them on to the fourteenth, and then they cried out quarter. It is not reasonable to expect Esop should gain so great a victory here, since it is possible, by fooling with his sword, I may have turn'd the edge on't. For I confess in the translation I have not at all stuck to the original; nay, I have gone further: I have wholly added the fifth act, and crowded a country gentleman into the fourth; for which I ask Monsieur Boursaut's pardon with all my heart, but doubt I never shall obtain it for bringing him into such company. Though, after all, had I been so complaisant to have waited on his play word for word, it is possible, even that might not have ensured the success of it; for though it swam in France, it might have sunk in England. Their country abounds in cork, ours in lead." (Preface to the comedy "Æsop.").

The little success which this piece met with on the English stage is thus explained in the words of the actor-playwright, Cibber: "The character that delivers precepts of wisdom, is in some sort severe upon the auditor, for shewing him one wiser than himself; but when folly is his object, he applauds himself for being wiser than the coxcomb he laughs at; and who is not more pleased with an occasion to commend, than to accuse himself?" The French piece was acted at Paris in 1690. The translation is not literal, since much has been altered from the original and much added thereto. Vanbrugh has excelled Boursault in the comic episodes, and has put more life into the fables, but the Frenchman has shown more dignity than his imitator in the more serious scenes of the piece. Here, again, we find Vanbrugh to have considered the requirements of his hearers, and also, following the direction of his own talent, to have treated the subject less seriously and more coarsely than the French writer has done. Vanbrugh's own additions consist of that scene in the fourth Act between Æsop and the country gentleman, Polidorus Hogstye, and the greater part of the fifth Act. We must mention that in 1704, Vanbrugh collaborated with Congreve and Walsh in a translation of Molière's "comédie-ballet" of M. de Pourceaugnac, under the well-expressed title of "Squire Trelooby," and Cibber ascribes to Vanbrugh a translation of Molière's "Cocu Imaginaire," entitled "The Cuckold in Conceit" (1707).

Vanbrugh left one comedy uncompleted, namely, "A Journey to London"; it was afterwards finished by Colley Cibber, under the title of "The Provoked Husband" (1728). It is regrettable that the piece was not finished by Vanbrugh, as the novel idea of the plot, the adroitly-constructed scenes, and the conspicuous wit, humour, and satire which they

display gave promise of this play becoming the best of all his productions. The following ideas are probably of French origin :

In Act I. Lady Townly says to her husband : " And so, my good lord, you would really have a woman of my rank and spirit stay at home to comfort her husband ! Lord, what notions of life some men have." This lofty independence is reminiscent of the character of Georges Dandin's high-born spouse. In Act II. Sir Francis Wronghead's journey to, and arrival at, London, was attended with disastrous effects very similar to Pourceaugnac's ill-timed journey to Paris from Limoges. Act III., in the conversation which takes place between Lord and Lady Townly, tells the story of Alceste and Célimène over again. We are forcibly reminded of Molière's own expression to his friend Chapelle (" Si vous saviez ce que je souffre vous auriez pitié de moi ") in the thoughts which Lord Townly expresses concerning his own matrimonial misery as compared with the future happiness of Manly : " Oh ! Charles," says Townly, " had I like thee been cautious in my choice, what melancholy hours had this heart avoided ! " Sir Francis Wronghead (Act IV.) soliloquises exactly after the manner of Dandino : " Very fine ! So here I must fast till I am almost famished, for the good of my country, while Madam is laying me out an hundred pound a day, in lace as fine as cobweb for the honour of my family ! 'Ods flesh ! Things had need go well at this rate ! "

Thus the influence of French comedy on Vanbrugh is very great, but we must give him the credit of having shown great skill in his method of borrowing. So clever has he done this, and so many light and skilful touches of his own invention has he added that we can regard him as the most interesting and entertaining dramatist of the period. Vanbrugh was, of all these English writers, the one who resembled Molière the most ; he certainly understood him the best, and was, moreover, by nature peculiarly fitted to profit by his acquaintance with the works of the French dramatist ; like Molière, he had the power of producing plays in rapid succession.

We rise from a study of the comedies of George Farquhar (1676-1707) with the conviction that his indebtedness to Molière is not extensive. The time when he was writing was one in which a reaction, of daily and increasing growth, was setting in against the fashion which had prevailed so long of imitating French manners and of regarding Paris and Parisian society as ideals of what was in every respect excellent. This cavalier society, as it may be termed, had never properly adapted itself to the French ways ; their

borrowed plumes were easy to be distinguished, and, after all, the imitation was nothing more than superficial. In 1698, the same year as that in which Farquhar produced his first comedy, "Love and a Bottle," was published Jeremy Collier's "A short view of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage." It is not necessary to discuss here at length how much right the dramatic authors who were attacked had on their side, or how far Collier in his scathing dissertation exceeded the bounds of justice; suffice it is to say that Collier was right in the main, and that his work not only dealt a heavy blow to the licentiousness of the stage, but also, a direct consequence of this, administered a severe reproof to the thoughtlessness of the age and the frivolous world of fashion. Addison, moreover, condemned the existing state of affairs. There was clearly in progress a steady movement towards reform. Englishmen began to take things much more seriously and to live more orderly lives. We find in the prologues of the comedies of this date jubilation over the defeats of Louis XIV. His court, with all its license and elegance, and French manners in general, are universally derided. Practically all the French characters in Farquhar's pieces are brought forward to be jeered at. Let us take, for example, the French Marquis [1] of the piece, "Sir Harry Wildair"; he is described in the "Dramatis Personæ" as a sharping refugee, and is made an object of ridicule throughout the play. The chaplain to the French officers, Foigard, in the "Beaux' Stratagem," is an object of odium. To his admonition to Scrub: "Save you, Master Scrub," he gets the sharp retort: "Sir, I won't be saved your way—I hate a priest, I abhor the French, and I defy the devil. Sir, I'm a bold Briton, and will spill the last drop of my blood to keep out Popery and Slavery."

However, Molière is not to be left out of the question entirely in dealing with Farquhar. In "Love and a Bottle" (1698) Mockmode is clearly in many respects based on the popular character of Monsieur Jourdain in "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" (1670); we may consider, for instance, the ridiculous airs which this country gull assumes in Act II. of Farquhar's piece. The same comedy of Molière gave Farquhar the idea for the scene of the quarrel between Rigadoon, the dancing-master, and Nimblewrist, the fencing-master. Herein is manifest the genius and cheery humour of our author, which, on the whole, outweigh the indelicacy of his pieces. It is interesting to notice that Farquhar, in this situation, brings less characters on to the stage than Molière has done. Out of the "maître de musique" and

(1) "Fortune," he says, "give de Anglisman de riches, but nature give de Franceman de politique to correct de unequal distribution."

the "maître à danser" Farquhar has made but one character, namely, Rigadoon, while the "maître de philosophie" does not appear at all. Mockmode, it must be remembered, is "a young squire, newly come from the university, and setting up for a beau." It is evident that for such a man who has received a university training, the services of a "maître de philosophie" are unnecessary. Mockmode, with his qualifications, does not need to take lessons in phonetics as his predecessor Jourdain did, for the latter was quite illiterate; it will be remembered that his teacher had even to inform him of the fact that "tout ce qui n'est point prose, est vers; et tout ce qui n'est point vers, est prose," a truth which he subsequently made known with pride to his scornful wife.

The above influence from the French comedy is quite certain. Act III., Sc. 2, proves it; we here have Mockmode offering to lend fifty guineas to the poet Lyric, and esteeming it an honour to have such a privilege, while Lyric expresses a desire to make the acquaintance of the lady whom Mockmode courts; Farquhar was plainly thinking of M. Jourdain's liberality towards the Count, and the latter's subsequent cold reception by Madame Jourdain. But without wishing to urge the influence too far, we feel that Farquhar has had Molière in mind in certain other instances. Taking the pieces in the order of their production, we note in Act II. of "The Constant Couple" (1700) that Clincher Senior insists emphatically on his brother addressing him as "Sir"; this savours of the upstart such as he appears in the person of the bourgeois, Jourdain. Again, in "The Inconstant" (1703), in the second Act, the lovers' quarrel which rages between young Mirabell and Oriana, probably owes its origin to that thrice-repeated scène of "brouillerie" and "raccommodement" in Molière's works. Lastly, in the "Beaux' Stratagem" (1707) we have noticed the following passages to be of probable French influence:

Act I.: The landlord Boniface speaking of Lady Bountyful as having "cured more people in and about Lichfield within ten years than the doctors have killed in twenty." This is Molière's favourite theme over again.

Act II.: Archer, whose rôle was excellently performed by Farquhar's intimate friend, Wilks, takes Cherry, the landlady's daughter, through a catechism on love, in a style remarkably similar to that scène in the "Ecole des Femmes" (1662) where Arnolphe so strongly lays down the law to his ward, Agnès.

Act III.: Here we have "précieosité" displayed in Archer's conversation with the ladies: "In a great many of us I believe it proceeds from some melancholy particles of

the blood occasioned by the stagnation of wages." In fact, the whole scene between Archer, Dorinda, and Mrs. Sullen, affords a forcible reminder of "Les Précieuses Ridicules" (1659).

Act IV. : Aimwell's feigned sickness which is the means of his gaining admission to the dwelling-house of his lady-love reminds us at once of similar artifices adopted by the lovers in some of Molière's comedies (e.g., in "Le Médecin malgré lui").

Aimwell and Archer seem to be copying the tactics of Mascarille and Jodelet in "Les Précieuses Ridicules," when they conduct Dorinda and Mrs. Sullen respectively through the drawing-rooms, and are all the while discussing learnedly the merits of the various paintings. Archer's speeches smack of "préciosité"; for example: "Where's the swarm of killing cupids that should ambush there? The lips are too figur'd out; but where's the carnation dew, the pouting ripeness that tempts the taste in the original?"

Act V. : It is interesting to observe in this Act that an allusion is made to the old story of "Amphitryon," which Plautus, Molière, and Dryden successively handled; Archer says to Mrs. Sullen: "I'm a Jupiter in love, and you shall be my Alcmena."

It will be remembered how frequently in Molière, Sganarelle shows himself to be a braggart, whereas his cowardice prevails when there is actual need of a display of his bravery. Now Scrub, in the burglary scene of this Act, seems a similar character:

"Archer: Scrub, will you undertake to secure him?
Scrub: Not I, Sir; kill him, kill him."

Farquhar wrote an "Essay on Comedy," but this is of very little value from the point of view of literature. A reading of it inclines us to think that its author may have owed something to Molière's "Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes," especially where he so emphatically declares that the success of a comedy should be decided by the way in which it is received by the public, and not by its following or not following the rules laid down by Aristotle. There are a few other points which ought to be mentioned, as we are dealing with a French influence. (1) Leigh Hunt explains to us that in 1699 there was published a small volume, entitled "The Adventures of Covent Garden," in imitation of Scarron's "City Romance." Thence Farquhar took the characters of Lady Lurewell and Colonel Standard and the incidents of Beau Clincher and Tom Errand's change of

(1) Leigh Hunt: "The Dramatic Works of Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar."

clothes, with other circumstances. The character of Sir Harry Wildair is Farquhar's own property, and the general conduct of the piece is his own.

Farquhar shows every evidence of having been thoroughly acquainted with the French language and the French people. In 1704 he produced the "Stage Coach," a copy from the French; this he wrote in conjunction with a Frenchman, Motteux, the translator of Rabelais, who also composed some of Farquhar's best prologues and epilogues. This Frenchman was noted for his mastery of the English idiom, and for the excellence of his English translation of "Don Quixote." Moreover, there are not a few French names given to Farquhar's characters, and when he has to represent a Frenchman's broken English and the scraps of French therein interspersed, the English dramatist shows himself to be an adept.

The two comedies of Molière which the actor-playwright Colley Cibber (1671-1757) adapted to the English stage come outside the period with which this dissertation is intended to deal. However, as his literary activity had been in evidence since 1689, it may not be out of place to say something about them. "The Non-Juror" was represented at the Theatre Royal on December 6th, 1717. The fact that the plot of Crown's "The English Friar" was suggested by Molière's "Tartuffe" has already been mentioned; it was probably this plot which supplied Cibber with the hint to utilise "Tartuffe." "The Non-Juror" follows the French masterpiece more closely than does Crown's play, and to Cibber is the credit of having had a moral purpose in view, the exposure of a real public evil. In the dedication to his play, "The Careless Husband" (1704), he had expressly declared it his intention to attempt to reform the coarseness of contemporary comedy, and yet we now find him greatly at fault in the matter, thirteen years after the declaration of this resolve. The other play in question is "The Refusal of the Ladies' Philosophy," which was acted at Drury Lane in 1721. This is an adaptation, though with not a few alterations, of Molière's "Les Femmes Savantes" (1672). This was not the first occasion of the representation of this excellent French comedy on the English stage. Wright had previously adapted it in 1693, under the title of "The Female Virtuosoes." It may be interesting to quote several passages from Cibber's play and compare them with the original. In Act I. we are introduced to Sophronisba (the Armande of the French play), who is described by Granger as being "so wrapt in the pride of her imaginary knowledge that she almost forgets she is a woman, and thinks all offers of love to her person a dishonour to the dignity of her soul."

Frankly says to Granger concerning her: "You must know that this marble-hearted lady, who could not bear my addresses to herself, has, notwithstanding, flesh and blood enough to be ten times more uneasy that I now pay them to her sister." Sir Gilbert, like Chrysale, had married a blue-stocking; he bewails his fate in these appropriate words: "She is too wise and too wilful for me." The conversation in the first scene of Act II., between the two sisters, Charlotte and Sophronia, is based on, though not translated literally from Act I., Scene 1, of "Les Femmes Savantes." It is Lady Wrangle, a similar character to Molière's Philaminte, who counsels Charlotte thus: "First cultivate your mind, correct and mortify these sallies of your blood. Learn of your sister here to live a bright example of your sex; refine your soul, give your happier hours up to science, arts, and letters; enjoy the raptures of philosophy, subdue your passions, and renounce the sensual commerce of mankind." She continues afterwards in this strain: "When you have gone through my studies, Madam, philosophy will tell you 'tis possible a well-natur'd mind, though fated to a husband, may be at once a wife and a virgin." Mr. Frankly confesses who is the real object of his affections in the presence of the three ladies, just as Clitandre does in Molière's comedy, to the two sisters. We notice that Chrysale, the patron saint of the hen-pecked husband, has a comrade likewise afflicted. Frankly says of Lady Wrangle: "She can blow up my lady, and you know my lady governs your father." The scene where Philaminte angrily dismisses her servant is excellently reproduced in the English comedy. Lady Wrangle complains that "that changeling innocent has given that savage beast the cook my whole new translation of the passion of Byblis, for waste paper to be torn or tortured to a thousand sordid uses." The dispute which ensues is really very skilfully adapted, and is worthy of the original. Cibber, moreover, has shown much cleverness in the way he has changed the names of Molière's characters to suit the requirements of his audience. Witling, for instance, is a splendid translation of the name of Molière's celebrated character, Trissotin.

Mrs. Centlivre (1678 circ.—1722) wrote numerous plays, several of which were influenced by those of Molière. "Love's Contrivance" (1703) will be treated at full length, as the authoress is more indebted for this piece to Molière himself than for any other of her comedies. Before describing this influence in full, it is necessary to make mention of two other instances, one an example of direct borrowing, the other of the expanding of one of Molière's popular characters. The first of these two points is the fact that Mrs. Centlivre

wrote in prose "The Gamester" (1705), which is clearly translated from "Le Joueur" (represented in 1696) of Regnard. The gambling-scene, however, is of Mrs. Centlivre's own invention. The next thing is that Marplot in "The Busy-Body" (1709), is an expansion of Lélie in "L'Etourdi" and Marall in Dryden. Not only does Marplot allow his tongue to do mischief, but he also commits a succession of nonsensical exploits in action.

Mrs. Centlivre was at an early age mistress not only of the French language, but also of the Latin, Spanish, and Italian tongues. Her third husband, we are told, was a French gentleman; she was thus well able to read and understand Molière. The comedy in question, "Love's Contrivance," had another title, namely, "Le Médecin Malgré Lui," the exact name of Molière's excellent farce. In her preface to this comedy she writes: "Some scenes I confess are partly taken from Molière, and I dare be bold to say it has not suffered in the translation; I thought 'em pretty in the French, and cou'd not help believing that they might divert in an English dress. The French have that light airiness in their temper, that the least glimpse of wit sets them a laughing, when 'twould not so much as make us smile; so that when I found the style too poor, I endeavoured to give it a turn; for whoever borrows from them must take care to touch the colours with an English pencil, and form the piece according to our manners. When first I took those scenes of Molière's, I designed but three acts; for that reason I chose such as suited best with farce, which, indeed, are all of the sort you'll find in it; for what I added to 'em, I believe my reader will allow to be of a different style; at least some very good judges thought so, and in spite of me divided it into five acts, believing it might pass amongst the comedies of those times. And, indeed, I have no reason to complain, for I confess it met a reception beyond my expectation. I must own myself indefinitely obliged to the players, and in a great measure the success was owing to them."

Thus Mrs. Centlivre, in borrowing from Molière, displays that same spirit of vanity which Shadwell expressed in the Introduction to his "Miser."

We will divide the sources from which Mrs. Centlivre has taken ideas into three parts, and discuss them individually.

(a) "Le Médecin Malgré Lui."

Act I., Sc. 3, of the English comedy clearly owes its origin to this source; it is the scene in which Martin and his wife are quarrelling. When Octavio presents himself to act as mediator between the two, he meets with the same rebuff as does the neighbour Monsieur Robert in "Le Médecin

Malgré Lui." Martin, in the English comedy, does not have to go through the preliminary ordeal of being beaten before he poses as a medical man. It is Bellmire who takes him to his lodgings, and wheedles him by the remark: "You used to be a lucky rogue upon a pinch."

Lucinda in Act III., Sc. 1, pretends to be dumb in the same way as Lucinde in Molière's comedy. In the last scene of Act III., Martin's wife's craftiness in directing Self-will's footman to her own husband, as though to a great physician, is, of course, directly taken from Molière's farce. Martin does not play his part of doctor right on to the end as Sganarelle does, and no apothecary is introduced.

(b) "Le Mariage Forcé."

Mrs. Centlivre seems to have been indebted to this piece even more than to "Le Médecin Malgré Lui." In Act I., Sc. 2, Sir Toby Doubtful consults Octavio as to whether he himself will do well to marry; the idea is taken from the character of Sganarelle in "Le Mariage Forcé."

At the end of the fourth Act of the English comedy, notice is given of Sir Toby's intention to consult a wise man of France on his proposed marriage, a situation which is plainly suggested by those two scenes in "Le Mariage Forcé" where Sganarelle interviews the two philosophers.

The whole of Act V., Scene 1, between Sir Toby and Bellmire is directly taken from "Le Mariage Forcé," and also Act V., Sc. 3, where the same two characters reappear, owes its origin to the same scource.

The last scene, between Sir Toby Doubtful and Self-Will, where the former shuffles out of his promise to marry Lucinde, is copied from the latter part of "Le Mariage Forcé."

(c) But apart from these two pieces of Molière, Mrs. Centlivre seems to have borrowed scenes and situations from other plays of his, and compounded them together. The father insisting (Act I.) on his daughter marrying the man of his choice and not of her selection (Selfwill and Lucinda) is a favourite and oft-recurring situation in Molière's comedies, where fathers constantly thwart their daughters' love. The following little speech by Sir Toby is certainly modelled on one of Harpagon's sayings: "Do you hear, if anybody brings me any money, send for me to Mr. Self-will's house immediately; but if any wants money, tell 'em I'm not at home, nor shan't be all day."

In Act III., Sc. 1, of the English comedy, Selfwill, Lucinda, and Belliza form another trio like Orgon, Marianne, and Dorine in "Tartuffe."

The artifice adopted for putting a letter into the possession of the dumb lady, Lucinda, namely, Martin's getting admittance by crying out "China Oranges," is of Mrs. Centlivre's own invention.

Octavio is son of Sir Toby Doubtful's particular friend, and his demeanour leads us to conclude decisively that the situation has been borrowed from that of Horace and Arnolphe in the "Ecole des Femmes." Horace, it will be remembered, turned out to be the son of Arnolphe's intimate friend.

Sir Toby's Doubtful's rapturous love speech to Lucinda in Act IV., Sc.2, is certainly based on Molière: "Well, my dear, we shall be very happy, you shall never refuse me anything, and I'll do just what I please with you; we may toy, and play, and kiss. . . ."

Octavio tells Sir Toby a story about a diamond ring for the bride, an incident clearly copied from Molière's "L'Avare." The final stroke in the piece is reminiscent of the last scene of the "Fourberies de Scapin." It is necessary here to make mention of the fact that Molière's "Le Médecin Malgré Lui" had previously been utilised by John Lacy in 1669, who founded upon it his comedy entitled "The Dumb Lady," or "The Farrier made Physician," [1] which was produced in that year at the Theatre Royal. Lacy, however, borrowed his *dénoûment* and the conclusion of his fourth Act from "L'Amour Médecin" (1665). Lacy's concoction from Molière seems to have been held in high esteem by his contemporaries; it is true that he shows considerable wit, but all this is lost in the unblushing coarseness which pervades the whole piece. Molière's excellent piece, "Le Médecin Malgré Lui," is best known on the English stage as Fielding's "Mock Doctor" (1732). Before closing this chapter, mention must be made of the fact that Sir Richard Steele (1671-1729) took the idea of his comedy, entitled "The Lying Lover, or the Ladies' Friendship" (1703) from "Le Menteur" (1642) of the great Corneille. This charming comedy which had already (in 1661) been translated into English under the title of "The Mistaken Beauty, or the Liar," was founded on Ruiz de Alarcon's "Verdad Sospechosa." The fact that Steele made use of the plot of Molière's slight sketch, "Le Sicilien ou L'Amour Peintre," for his comedy entitled "The Tender Husband, or the Accomplish'd Fools" (1705) has already been noticed. To Steele is due the credit of having endeavoured in his plays to correct the manners and morals of the age in which he lived. It was he who, in reference to Etherege's comedy of "Sir Fopling Flutter," has said: "I allow it to be nature, but it is nature in its utmost corruption and degeneracy." [2]

(1) In Genest's "English Stage" occurs the following note: "Dumb Lady, or The Farrier made a Physician"—this farce in five acts was put together by Lacy—the main plot is taken from Molière's "Mock Doctor"; the catastrophe is borrowed from Molière's "Love's the Best Doctor."

(2) "The Spectator" (No. 65, Tuesday, May 15th, 1711).

## CHAPTER IV.

(Vast superiority of Molière over the English writers from the point of view of dramatic construction).

(1) We intend, in the present chapter, to discuss the works of Molière and those of the English Restoration dramatists mainly from the important standpoint of the art of dramatic construction, and with this end in view, we propose to make a thorough investigation into the methods of working adopted by Molière in " Le Misanthrope," and to contrast them with the system followed by Wycherley in " The Plain Dealer." *All the incidents of Molière's play are represented as taking place in Célimène's house.* The opening scene of Act I. of the French masterpiece shows Alceste and Philinte engaged in serious conversation. Philinte considers human frailties as a means of exercising our philosophy. His conduct is ever reasonable, and, as it seems to us, worthy of universal approval. He does not carry his censure to extremes; he is the truly honest man of the piece. In direct contrast with this character we have Alceste, whose temperament is such that he even disowns friendship with a man with whom he had been for a long time acquainted, solely because the latter was accustomed to show that outward courtesy and urbanity which are due between man and man. Furthermore, so deeply rooted is Alceste's universal detestation of humanity, that he considers it as a disgrace to be the recipient of praises from his fellow-men. This stoicism of Alceste, admirable as it may apear in some respects, is not so congenial to us or so practicable as the rational philosophy of his friend. Now it is clear that Molière, knowing that an object is never seen to better advantage than when viewed with its opposite, has improved upon the effect which the mere personage of the man-hater would produce in its own light of ridicule by bringing the character into open contrast with the attitude of moderation assumed by Philinte. In this way he has, from the very outset, riveted the attention of his audience on the problem which he has manifestly set himself to prove, namely, that even virtue, carried beyond its proper sphere, ceases to attract our admiration. We shall endeavour to show how this central purpose reveals itself throughout the play, and how all the developments of both plot and character serve the more fully to give prominence to this main theme. Hitherto we have had displayed before us the theory of Alceste's misanthropic principles, set forth in the presence of a sympathetic friend, who understood him; we now see these principles in actual practice. In Scene 2, Molière brings the misanthropist into contact with a conceited poetaster, Oronte, for the main purpose of showing Alceste's

tactless methods of dealing with him. The evasion to which the misanthropist has recourse is infinitely more crushing than the plain truth would have been. Alceste has reason on his side; indeed he supplies us with excellent instruction for the selection of our friends, but much of what he says might with advantage have been left unsaid. Molière, in this scene, demonstrates how greatly it derogates from the character of a truly honest man to engage in so vehement a dispute on a matter so trifling. It is highly probable that Alceste's criticism of Oronte's production embodies Molière's own ideas concerning the lyrical poetry of the day. It is interesting, however, to observe how the dramatist does not allow himself to be diverted from his main purpose by this side-issue, but, on the contrary, with masterly skill, makes it subordinate to it, so as to render more marked the distinction between the two characters in question. After Oronte's departure, Alceste is not in the least degree sorry for the attitude he has adopted. When (in Scene 3) Philinte expostulates with him upon the impropriety of having so unnecessarily wounded Oronte's pride, who, he remarks, will probably bring an awkward business about his ears for his excessive sincerity, he says nothing about the recent occurrence, but makes every effort to escape from the presence of his friend. The main idea is thus prominently brought forward throughout this Act. In the second Act we are immediately introduced to another phase of Alceste's nature; he is in love. In the impassioned Alceste love presents quite an unusual appearance. Whereas the ordinary lover would offer the incense of sighs and tears, Alceste unhesitatingly reprehends his Célimène for her failings, and especially her readiness to give ear to the extravagant love-speeches of a crowd of suitors. Molière, who played the part of Alceste, could heartily enter into the spirit of the scene when he thought of his own unhappy relations with his wife, who acted the part of Célimène, and it was doubtless with real earnestness that he gave utterance to the words: "C'est pour mes péchés que je t'aime." Stapfer has made some useful remarks concerning the presence of love in the heart of a man of so peculiar a temperament as Alceste. He writes as follows: [1] "L'exemple le plus dramatique que soit dans le théâtre de Molière de contradictions naturelles est Alceste. En dépit de ses principes, il aime une coquette, et Philinte s'étonne avec raison, de cet étrange choix où s'engage son sœur; mais Alceste lui répond avec plus de raison encore:

> Il est vrai, la raison me le dit chaque jour;
> Mais la raison n'est pas ce qui règle l'amour.

(1) P. Stapfer: "Molière et Shakespeare," Chap. V., P. 205.

En dépit de ses maximes et de l'engagement formel qu'il vient de prendre, le Misanthrope commence par envelopper dans les plis et les détours d'une politesse embarrassée sa critique du sonnet d'Oronte."

It is not so much on Célimène that the interest of the audience is centred; she is a finished coquette, and the hearers were doubtless well acquainted with such a character, but their attention is directed rather to the words which pass between her and her misanthropic admirer; they desire to see how far he will carry the language of philosophy into his conversation with the coquette. The development of Alceste's character is all the while uppermost in Molière's mind, even in the little scene where Basque announces the arrival of the Marquis Acaste, whose presence, together with that of Clitandre, will afford a suitable means of showing the effect produced on the mind of Alceste by a practical display of Célimène's coquetry. The succeeding scenes of this Act unite to throw further light on the principal personages, and this is especially the case in the famous fifth scene, wherein Molière portrays with power and feeling that uncharitable and ungenerous scandal which is but too often the leading topic of conversation in society. Molière gives great force to the discussion by his making Alceste decide to remain in the company of the marquises; Alceste had at first been desirous to avoid seeing the visitors, but even in his case, the motto, "omnia vincit amor," finally proved efficacious. The company present form a veritable School for Scandal, for the characters of no less than twenty different people are severely lashed. The audience could not fail to be diverted by the "buzzing scandal that fills the place." But it is reasonable to suppose that this interest was considerably heightened by their knowledge of the presence of Alceste, whose scathing criticism they were doubtless awaiting with almost breathless expectation. It was quite a marvel that he had been able to listen with patience so long, but at last he burst forth and administered to the calumniators a suitable and crushing reproof. At the close of the Act, Alceste is summoned before the tribunal of the maréchals of France on the subject of his refusal to praise Oronte's sonnet. He consents to go, but, with such tenacity does he cling to his former view, that he declares that the author of such verses deserves to be hanged, a remark which provokes the laughter of the marquises, and again brings prominently forward his character in all its extravagance. At the same time the firmness and sincerity of his nature are revealed in his promise to return without delay to terminate the discussion with the marquises. The third Act commences with a scene between Clitandre and

Acaste, who claims to be the darling of the fair sex, and the favourite at court; the conversation which takes place between these two marquises is typical of their respective characters, displaying in vivid colours the presumption and fatuous vanity of these two gentlemen. This opportunity which is granted them of mutually expressing to each other their sentiments affords a direct proof that Alceste's theory regarding such men is the right one. The words which pass between the two exquisites are most diverting in themselves, but it is the thought of Alceste and the reception he would have accorded to such speeches which makes us the more eager to follow out this interview to the end. Further on, we have Alceste's principles again vividly brought home to us by Célimène's reception of the prude Arsinoé. No sooner is she informed that this lady is below, then she pitilessly lets fly her arrows of scandal; but a vast change momentarily comes over her demeanour when the prudish lady actually appears. Célimène then, with excessive dissimulation, accords her a most gracious welcome. In Scene V. we are again the witnesses of another little picture of the world and its ways. It is as if pictures, representing Alceste's view of the world, are being in turn held up before us; the picture of the tête-à-tête of the marquises has been withdrawn, and we are now face to face with the strongly-contrasted characters of the coquette and the prude. These two ladies, after having indulged in mutual reprehension, take their leave of each other, and Arsinoé remains in the presence of Alceste whom she sees approaching. The prude tries all she can to win the heart of the misanthropist with whom she is really in love, but her methods are tactless and she clearly has no understanding of the disposition of the man to whom she is speaking. Arsinoé is the only one of the characters hitherto presented to us, who has not received a severe remonstrance from the misanthropist; he, in a quiet but telling manner, now also rebukes this female backbiter. The leading character, Alceste, whether present on the stage or absent from it, is continually uppermost in our minds, and the interest centred upon him forms, as it were, one main stream into which all the minor streams of interest empty themselves, and this main stream unceasingly flows on replenished and impelled. The opening of the first scene in Act IV. lays still more stress on the principal character; Philinte is describing the way in which Alceste became reconciled with the sonneteer. The misanthropist's obstinate attitude on the subject of a few verses again led him beyond controllable bounds, the extravagance of the character being thus again vividly depicted. Alceste's affection for Célimène forms the topic of conversation between Philinte and Eliante,

the coquette's cousin. Eliante herself expresses a liking for Alceste, and this inclination has its origin in the admiration with which she looks upon his heroic virtues. Even while Philinte is confessing his love to Eliante, he makes reference to the misanthropist who now again appears in person. His face is angry and bears the marks of jealousy; he is quite incapable of listening to reason, and the counsel of his friend, which is intended to soothe him, only serves to irritate him further, so peculiar is the temperament of the man. To Alceste offering his love to Eliante, the latter replies that it is anger which dictates the vows he proffers. The last scene forms a very vivid picture of the conflict of the passions raging in Alceste's troubled mind. In the third scene of the fourth Act we have a fine display of Molière's genius; he gives us a striking picture of the morose peevishness of Alceste by contrasting with it the cool unconcern of Célimène; mutual animation and force are imparted to each character, and each is shown up more distinctly and strikingly from the different lights in which they stand in opposition. That experienced critic of the French stage, Francisque Sarcey, has made some very useful observations on this scene; in the course of his remarks he says: (1) "Ce qui fait l'originalité des scènes d'Alceste avec Célimène, c'est que ce pauvre Alceste s'obstine à raisonner avec elle, et qu'il raisonne très juste. . . . On ne sait pas bien, il ne sait pas bien lui-même, ce qui souffre le plus dans cet entretien, ou de son amour raillé, ou de sa logique en déroute." In the last scene of Act IV. we have an excellent instance of the way in which Molière makes every development of the plot, unimportant though it may appear, contribute in a direct way to the setting forth of the principal character in as many different aspects as one can wish to see it. The inopportune prattle of the blundering valet not only spreads a spirit of cheerfulness through the dialogue, but affords a means of showing the misanthropist with his patience severely tried. The opening scene of the last Act continues to give emphasis to the singular temperament of the misanthropist. He has lost his suit; his adversary by intrigue and treachery has gained the mastery over him. Moreover, he is accused of being the author of a scandalous libel, and both his adversary and Oronte are trying their best to confirm the suspicion. These new incidents serve to increase his detestation of the society of men. The presence of Philinte, who gives expression to his philosophy of the world, serves to throw light on the main

(1) Francisque Sarcey: "Quarante Ans de Théâtre" (Vol. II.). Sarcey stated in one of his critical essays that his sole occupation in life was to observe "les impressions des divers publics dont il faisait partie, et de chercher, quand par hasard il ne les partageait pas, les motifs de son insolement."

character who is summing up his experiences and announcing the only solution to the problem, namely, a retirement to the wilds of solitude, or the society of wolves and tigers, enemies less implacable to man than his fellow-creatures. So prejudiced is he against mankind that he is unwilling to give ear to what Philinte may have to say in defence of humanity. Alceste clearly weakens his case by his positive statement: "Les hommes, morbleu, sont faits de cette sorte!" Granted that this is so, what then is the good of unnecessarily wounding their self-love when he cannot entertain any hope of curing them of it? In Scenes 2 and 3, the impassioned Alceste, his redoubted rival Oronte, and the coquette Célimène form a very amusing trio, and here we have the only instance of any point on which Alceste agrees with Oronte, namely, their mutual desire for Célimène to declare without hesitation on whom she has really fixed her choice. In Scenes 4 and 5 we hear the reading of some letters, containing the coquette's real opinion of her hapless suitors, including Alceste himself. This amusing situation offers a further proof of Alceste's theory concerning the insincerity of society. In Scene 6 Alceste gives a final crushing reproof to Arsinoé who had again attempted to ingratiate herself into his favour by means of adulation. The final scene drives home still more forcibly the truth which Molière has plainly striven to impress upon us throughout the play; he has represented a man, carrying virtue to excess, as having become the sport of a fickle woman. The character of the man is strong, and perfectly uniform throughout. We feel convinced that Molière had no intention of rendering virtue odious. His portrayal of such a character undoubtedly proceeds from his extensive knowledge of men. M. Faguet has exactly expressed the truth in the following words: (1) "Molière sait les défauts qui sont d'ordinaire attachés aux vertus. Il sait que la passion du bien, de la vérité, et de la droiture ne va pas sans impatience, sans irritation, sans emportement; que l'humeur contredisante est une suite de ces travers; qu'enfin un peu d'orgueil et je ne sais quel plaisir amer à prendre les hommes en défaut, finit par s'y mêler; et il dit aux honnêtes gens trop fiers de l'être: 'Prenez garde! Je fais de vous un cas particulier: la sincérité dont votre âme se pique a quelque chose de noble et d'héroïque, mais au fond de votre vertu il peut y avoir un peu de présomption, qui est un égoïsme aussi et qui éloigne de vous les hommes, ou vous force à vous en éloigner au lieu de les aimer et de les servir.'" Alceste is the representative of a class of men which has always existed and which will continue to exist. Sarcey has thus expressed the

(1) Etudes littéraires—XVIIe siècle—Le Misanthrope.

universal character of Alceste: [1] "Alceste est l'immortel patron de ces natures droites et fortes qui, n'accordant rien aux préjugés du monde, vont hardiment leur chemin sans se soucier du qu'en dira-t-on. Molière ne l'a mis aux prises qu'avec les détails un peu mesquins de la vie des cours. Mais où vouliez-vous qu'il le plaçat? Il fallait bien le mettre dans un cadre du temps. C'est à vous, critiques, de l'en détacher et de le transporter par l'imagination dans d'autres ordres d'idées." If we now turn to the "Plain Dealer" of Wycherley, our nerves receive a sudden shock as we make the acquaintance of the man whose every speech confirms the character which Leigh Hunt has ascribed to him: [2] "a ferocious sensualist who believed himself as great a rascal as he thought everybody else," and concerning whom and the relation he bears to Alceste, Macaulay has justly said: [3] "The surliness of Molière's hero is copied and caricatured. But the most nauseous libertinism and the most dastardly fraud are substituted for the purity and integrity of the original." So coarse an interpretation of Molière's noble character has proved equally appalling to the French critics. Jusserand expresses his views concerning the general aspect in the following passage: [4] "Le grand point à Paris est d'être décent, régulier, logique, d'ouvrir sur la vie des fenêtres qui, comme celles des maisons, promettent de voir ce qui est au droit devant nous. Le grand point à Londres à cette date, c'est d'être licencieux démesuré, surprenant; la Restauration honore Wycherley et Dryden, . . . accommode Molière et nos dramaturges à la mode anglaise . . . transforme Alceste en un loup de mer, jureur, fumeur, débauché, et nauséabond 'that smells like Thames Street'" ('Plain Dealer'). This character Manly by name, is thus described in the Dramatis Personæ: "Of an honest, surly, nice humour suppos'd first, in the time of the Dutch war, to have procur'd the command of a ship, out of honour, not interest; and choosing a sea life only to avoid the world." [5] Mr. George Meredith, with reference to "The Plain Dealer," has written as follows: "It may be shown by an analysis of Wycherley's 'Plain Dealer,' a coarse prose adaptation of the Misanthrope, stuffed with lumps of realism in a vulgarized theme to hit the mark of English appetite, that we have in it the keynote of the comedy of our stage. It is Molière travestied, with

(1) Francisque Sarcey: "Quarante Ans de Théâtre" (Vol. II.).

(2) Leigh Hunt: "The dramatic works of Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhah, with biographical and critical notices."

(3) Macaulay: "Essay on the Comic Dramatists of the Restoration."

(4) Jusserand: "Shakespeare en France."

(5) George Meredith: "An Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit."

the hoof to his foot and hair on the pointed tip of his ear." In the opening scene of Act I. *which takes place in Manly's lodgings,* we find this character in conversation with Lord Plausible. This Lord Plausible, unlike Philinte, is in no respect a truly honest man, but is rather according to the description of the characters at the beginning of the play: "a ceremonious, supple, commending coxcomb." Neither of the two men conducts himself or his discourses in such a manner as to ensure our esteem. Manly who owns to being "an unmannerly sea-fellow" declares: "If I ever speak well of people (which is very seldom indeed) it should be sure to be behind their backs; and if I wou'd say, or do ill to any, it should be to their faces." Although admitting that to speak ill of people behind their backs is not the action of a man of honour, he at the same time hints at the possibility of himself following such a course, for he says: "If I did say, or do any ill thing to any, it should be sure to be behind their backs out of pure good manners." Lord Plausible cannot be said to cast any degree of light on the main character; he holds with Manly no well-devised, philosophical argument which is in the least likely to convince him of the error of his ways. On the contrary, he serves merely as a butt for the insults and contradictious spirit of the Plain Dealer. Such a scene as this must certainly have proved most revolting to any Frenchmen who saw and heard it, and who were acquainted with Molière's work, and it would doubtless be such scenes as this of which Misson had personal recollections when he wrote: [1] "If there is anything that vexes me in the article of English plays it is that the authors of them plunder and copy all our writers, and insult them at the same time. All their best thoughts are taken from us; and instead of owning themselves obliged and indebted to us, they despise us in the most offensive manner: indeed and indeed this is not very civil." The second scene consists of a somewhat coarse conversation between two sailors on the subject of their master, Manly. We fail to discover any attempt at the gradual development of the main character of the piece. We have already learnt the man's repulsive disposition, and the scene merely serves to increase our abhorrence: "'Tis a hurry-durry blade; dost thou remember after we had tugg'd hard the old leaky long-boat to save his life, when I welcom'd him ashore, he gave me a box on the ear and call'd me fawning water-dog?" It must be confessed that Wycherley's wit is here, as frequently elsewhere, extremely laughable; for example, when this dis-

(1) Misson: "Mémoires et observations faites par un voyageur en Angleterre" (1697) (translated by John Ozell). The above quotation is to be found under the heading: "Plays."

cussion is abruptly brought to a close by the appearance of Manly, one of the sailors exclaims: "Hold thy peace, Jack, and stand by, the foul weather's coming." It must be acknowledged that up to the present the principal character has been the chief centre of attraction, but this has not been done in the adroit manner of Molière, whose Alceste is always a gentleman, and who attracts to himself the main interest as much by his own intrinsic worth, as by the code of rules, amusing in their severity, which he would impose on the world at large. The character of Manly, on the contrary, owes its prominence to the latter's blustering and coarse brutality to which he gives vent at every turn, addressing his attendants as rascals, rogues, dogs, and slaves. A quieter method of address would doubtless have proved more effective than all this bullying, for the sailors do not hesitate to adopt a witty and sarcastic method of replying to his outbursts of rage, a proceeding which has the effect of redoubling the force of his fury: "Would you be witty, you Brandy Casks you? You become a jest as ill as you do a horse. Begone, you dogs." Whereas we can respectfully regard Alceste as the enthusiastic advocate of a question of moral importance, and can look upon him as the embodiment of virtue, who continues to advance in our estimation and good-will, we can only look upon Manly as a blunt, surly fellow whose system of dealing with his fellow-creatures, if system it may be called, cannot possibly secure the approbation of rational minds, a man whom no reasonable person can look upon as containing any characteristic which is worth copying, and whose every speech, far from bringing us into contact with any question of moral importance, only adds to our detestation and scorn. We notice, in the following scene, that Wycherley introduces Freeman, who now opposes Manly's railings against humanity in a similar manner to that previously adopted by Lord Plausible. Now, what we are fully convinced of throughout Molière's plays is the entire distinction from each other of the various characters, but Wycherley does not observe this important point. It is true that Freeman does not exactly resemble Lord Plausible, but, in the main, as regards the positions which the two men occupy in the comedy there is very little to distinguish between them as we see from the words of Manly himself: "Thou art indeed like your Lord Plausible, the pink of courtesie, therefore hast no friendship." Whereas Molière certainly made every effort to keep the number of his characters as small as possible, for thereby he was enabled to keep them more distinct, Wycherley and the other Restoration dramatists seem in no degree to have learnt this lesson from the French master; Shadwell's stage, for

instance, is all the while swarming with actors. The marked distinction in Molière's work of the various characters from each other, is not merely characteristic of individual comedies, but is noticeable in the plays considered as a whole. In the "History of French Literature" (by Van Laun) we have this point prominently brought forward: "How remarkable and delicate is the *nuance* between his different characters, though they may represent the same profession or an ideal personage. None of his doctors are alike; his male and female scholars are dissimilar. Mascarille is not Gros-René, Scapin is not Sbrigani, Don Juan is not Dorante, Alceste is not Philinte, Isabelle is not Agnès, Sganarelle is not always the same, Ariste is not Béralde or Chrysalde." The writer also points out that the various servants, Nicole, Dorine, Martine, Marotte, Toinette, Claudine, and Lisette, the boobies, such as Alain and Lubin, and the intriguants in petticoats, such as Nerine, Lisette, and Frosine, vary in character, expression, and interest. The conversation which ensues between Manly and Freeman gives the former further opportunity to thunder out his sentiments of "plain dealing." But he does not impress us any the more favourably, and we are not able to feel anything like such respect towards his adversary in argument as we unceasingly feel towards Philinte in Molière's masterpiece. The following is a specimen of the style of argument adopted by Freeman, who himself nowhere shows that sincere, heartfelt interest in Manly, as Philinte did towards the man to whom he wished to be friendly: "Why, don't you know, Captain, that telling truth is a quality as prejudicial to a man that would thrive in the world, as square play to a cheat, or true love to a whore?" There is an underlying current of tartness in all the words to which Freeman gives utterance, and the impression we have of his conversation with Manly, presumably intended to convince the latter of the falsity of his ideas, is that it would be just as sensible for the blind to lead the blind, since Freeman himself, in contrast with the kindly nature of Philinte, is the most undesirable character. Fidelia, who appears in the next scene, is, as Macaulay pointed out, [1] "Shakespeare's Viola stolen and marred in the stealing." The essayist, a little further on, draws a comparison between the original character and Wycherley's interpretation of it: [1] "How careful has Shakespeare been in Twelfth Night to preserve the dignity and delicacy of Viola under her disguise! Even when wearing a page's doublet and hose, she is never mixed up with any transactions which the most fastidious mind could regard as leaving a stain on her. She is employed by the Duke in an embassy

(1) Macaulay: Essay on the Comic Dramatists of the Restoration.

of love to Olivia, but on an embassy of the most honourable kind. Wycherley borrows Viola ; and Viola forthwith becomes a pandar of the basest sort." Such, then, is the character here brought face to face with the plain-dealer, and the latter's spiteful and contradictory spirit has further opportunity for showing itself, and results in a further hatred of him on the part of the reader, a result the more perfectly accomplished inasmuch as Fidelia was in real earnest devoted to Manly, who herein shows the want of that discernment of character and sense of justice which appertain to Alceste ; but Manly, with the exception of one friendship which he possessed, metes out the same insulting treatment to all comers, and his deeply-rooted prejudice prevents him from wise consideration before he actually sets free his flow of pseudo-argument ; no one finds favour with him, all are bluntly included in his one all-sweeping method of treatment. Wycherley does not succeed for long in keeping the attention of his readers on the principal personage of the piece. Manly, with his perpetual brusqueness of humour, causes us to assume a passive attitude towards him, and the moment the petulant, litigious widow Blackacre and her son Jerry appear on the scene, our interest is immediately turned towards them. The idea for this widow Blackacre, [1] as Macaulay has shown, is borrowed from that of the Comtesse de Pimbesche in Racine's " Les Plaideurs," which character in its turn [2] " est calqué sur une femme du dix-septième siècle, la comtesse de Crissé, qui s'était rendue célèbre par sa manie de plaider." On no occasion does Alceste retire defeated from the field of argument, whereas here Manly finds it his best policy to withdraw from the irksome presence of this female litigant and her idiotic son. Then follows an amusing though irrelevant scene, tending in not the slightest degree towards the throwing of light on the main character, which, on the contrary, was the constant aim of Molière. It must be acknowledged that this scene exhibits some excellent specimen's of Wycherley's brilliant and energetic wit ; this may be seen from the following dialogue between the widow and Freeman :

" Widow : Yours wou'd be some sweet business, I warrant : What, 'tis no *Westminster-Hall* business : wou'd you have my advice?

Freeman : No, faith, 'tis a little *Westminster-Abbey* business : I wou'd have your consent."

The next scene consists of a conversation between Freeman and the jealous Fidelia on the subject of Manly's affection for Olivia, and then follows a somewhat wearisome

(1) Essay on the Comic Dramatists of the Restoration.
(2) Edition of Racine by Charles Louandre: Page 191, Note.

monologue of Fidelia, a method which Wycherley adopted in order to tie the disjointed members of his play together. The last scene shows Manly and Freeman in conversation concerning the former's mistress Olivia. Freeman argues with him, not with the downright sincerity of Philinte, but with the selfish desire of extracting from him further information about Olivia. This first Act, reviewed in its entirety, shows that the author had no settled intention, no firm guiding principle; the scenes do not run smoothly into one another as in Molière's play, and cannot be said to work together for any central purpose; indeed, Wycherley cannot be said to have any central purpose, as he starts straight away by introducing to us as his main character a man whose principles are so utterly repulsive as to dispel, right from the outset, those feelings of sympathy which we were prepared to hold out towards him, and which we were justified in cherishing towards Alceste throughout Molière's masterpiece. This Act may be taken as typical of Wycherley's marked inferiority to Molière as a dramatic writer; apart from other considerations, this inferiority, as we previously pointed out when speaking of Congreve's wit, was intensified by the fact that Wycherley and the majority of the other Restoration dramatists, were only playwrights, and knew but little about stagecraft, whereas Molière was able to combine the advantages of his being actor and playwright at the same time, qualities which of themselves were sufficient to keep him far and away above his English imitators in the art of dramatic construction. For the events of Act II. *we are transferred to Olivia's lodgings.* This Act, which is of great length, affords an excellent example of how the author allows his attention to drift into irrelevant scenes which have nothing whatever to do with the main subject with which he is supposed to be dealing; we refer in particular to that protracted scene at the close of the Act between the Widow Blackacre and Freeman. The way in which the English dramatist has drawn out and distorted that famous and powerfully written "scandal" scene in Molière's play, and also the disgusting nature of the reproduction he has made of the situation in Molière's "Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes," are points which cannot fail to attract our notice. In Act III. *the scene of action is again changed, this time to Westminster Hall;* the whole Act is full of life and bustle; for example, in the third scene the Widow Blackacre puts in an apearance amidst half-a-dozen lawyers; altogether fifteen different characters take part in the actual discourse, while the stage is all the while swarming with lawyers, attorneys, aldermen, and attendants. The Act produces a powerful sense of fulness of life; our interest becomes

general, and Manly's expressions of acrid cynicism are lost in the din and turmoil which fill the place. The scene in which the Widow Blackacre is busily engaged in argument with a crowd of lawyers, consisting, amongst others, of Sergeant Ploddon, Messrs. Quaint, Blunder, Petulant, Buttongown, and Splitcause, is only one among many scenes in this Act which afford merely a transitory interest for the hearer or the reader, and do not in any degree contribute to the emphasising of one central question of moral importance. *The first part of Act IV. takes us back again to Manly's lodgings.* It begins with a conversation between Fidelia and Manly ; the latter is eagerly enquiring of the result of Fidelia's visit to Olivia. It is appalling to think that a character based on the virtuous Alceste should ever be guilty of giving utterance to such a speech as the following ; it is Olivia to whom Manly is alluding : " Her love ! a whore's, a witch's love ! But, what, did she not kiss well, Sir? I'm sure I thought her lips—but I must not think of 'em more—but yet they are such I cou'd still kiss and grow to—and then tear off with my teeth, grind 'em into mammocks, and spit 'em into her cuckold's face." In the second scene we hear Manly and Freeman talking in a style by no means edifying on the subject of love and women ; they are interrupted by the announcement of the arrival of the widow Blackacre, who is described as " the scolding, daggled, gentlewoman," and Major Oldfox, whereupon Manly, Freeman and Fidelia immediately retire. After this, there ensues some amusing chatter between Oldfox and the widow, the former being 'anxious to read aloud some specimens of his poems and epigrams " the fruits of his leisure, the overflowings of his fancy and pen," and the latter being equally desirous of talking about legal affairs. In the next scene, Freeman again appears, this time accompanied by Jerry Blackacre attired in an old gaudy suit and red breeches of Freeman's. It is not long before the widow severely reprimands her son for the sudden change in his conduct, and for having taken leave, to use Jerry's own words, " of lawyering and petti-fogging." Freeman's design is to marry the widow, and, with this end in view, he has made the strategic move of winning over her son to his cause : " Come, Madam, in short you see I am resolv'd to have a share in the estate, yours or your son's ; if I cannot get you, I'll keep him who is less coy you find ; but, if you wou'd have your son again, you must take me too. Peace or War? Love or Law? You see my hostage is in my hands : I'm in possession." *For the latter part of this Act we are taken again to Olivia's lodgings.* Novel and Lord Plausible are heckling each other as to which of them stands the higher in Olivia's favour ; they both have

their courage damped off by an interchange of the letters received from the faithless Olivia. New scenes keep following each other in rapid succession. Now appears Vernish, Olivia's husband, as though recently arrived from a journey and holds a brief conversation with his wife; now a scene takes place between Olivia and the disguised Fidelia with Manly treading softly and keeping at some distance behind; he has the pleasure of hearing his own character depicted by Olivia who says of him: "Surly, intractable, snarling brute! He! A masty dog were as fit a thing to make a gallant of." This moving panorama of scenes and situations continues; we have a monologue spoken by Fidelia, a scene between Fidelia and Manly, and yet another between Fidelia and Olivia. To crown all, a revolting scene takes place between Fidelia and Vernish who has discovered the former's disguise, and is only prevented from the accomplishment of his evil designs by the timely interruption of a servant announcing that an alderman has brought him some money and is waiting to see him. It is impossible to detect in these rapidly revolving scenes any unity of purpose on the part of the author, but it must be acknowledged that they contain a great fund of wit and produce a sense of energy and fulness of life. *The last Act of the play commences at Eliza's lodgings* with Olivia and Eliza in conversation together. In the second scene these two ladies are accompanied by Vernish, the only man in whom Manly trusted. The latter's pretended deep insight into human character, however, did not prove of sufficient worth to prevent him from being gulled even by this chosen friend, who had himself married the woman whom Manly had entrusted to his guardianship. Vernish now retires, and Olivia and Eliza continue their tête-à-tête. *The scene now changes to the Cock in Bow Street* Here we listen to Fidelia and Manly discoursing on the subject of the latter's intended secret visit to Olivia. Afterwards Freeman joins them, and the speeches to which utterance is given are of a style which doubtless at that period would pass for the expression of worldly wisdom. Next follows a scene between Manly and Vernish, who are very soon interrupted by Freeman entering backwards and endeavouring to keep out Novel, Lord Plausible, Jerry, and Oldfox, who all press in upon him. Shortly afterwards, Fidelia again appears and holds conversation with Manly, while at the same time, Novel and Oldfox are busy heckling each other; at last Manly puts a stop to their heated dispute by blurting out: "Come, a pox on you both, you have done like wits now; for you wits, when you quarrel, never give over, till you prove one another fools." Then comes a further interview between Manly and Vernish,

and subsequently a lengthy monologue spoken by Vernish. A short scene follows between Manly and Freeman, and, after their departure, we are entertained by a scene between the Widow Blackacre, two knights of the post, and a waiter with wine ; Major Oldfox and two other waiters appear soon afterwards, and the knights withdraw. Subsequently the company is joined by a whole crowd of people, including Freeman, Jerry Blackacre, three bailiffs, a constable, and his assistants, together with the two knights of the post. *The scene now suddenly changes to Olivia's lodgings,* where Olivia is soon joined by Fidelia with Manly following softly behind. Then succeeds a scene of noise and confusion representing the breaking of doors, the drawing of swords, and the hurried bustle to and fro of the various actors. Afterwards, Freeman, Lord Plausible, Novel, Jerry Blackacre, and the pettifogging widow come crowding in, lighted by the two sailors bearing torches. In the course of the turmoil which has taken place, Fidelia's hair has become untied behind, and she appears without her peruke, which has been lost in the scuffle. Seeing this transformation, Manly exclaims : " What, you have not deceiv'd me, too, my little Volunteer ? " Fidelia's loyalty and devotion to him have been the means of partially reforming Manly of the coarse audacity of his caddish disposition ; he exclaims :

> " I will believe there are now in the world
> Good-natur'd friends, who are not prostitutes,
> And handsome women worthy to be friends :
> Yet, for my sake, let no one e'er confide
> In tears, or oaths, in love, or friend untry'd."

The two plays with which we have dealt in order to show the different methods of working of Molière and Wycherley, have been set forth as illustrative of what we feel concerning Molière's influence on the English school of dramatists as a whole. We cannot fail to observe throughout Molière's work, how all developments of both character and plot work simultaneously and systematically for the *central purpose* of the play, which is never lost sight of ; in other words, how Molière, faithful to the traditions of the French stage, invariably tends to the *concentration* of the interest on one question of moral importance, just as Corneille centres his on one struggle of the will. We feel that Molière's plays are not a merely momentary intellectual display, but are a spectacle of lasting effect for the mind and the heart. We look in vain for such unity of purpose in the works of Molière's imitators in England, and are bound to admit that the English have not really understood Molière or the reasons of his dramatic greatness, that they have only imitated him in a servile manner, taking from him " the

letter and not the spirit" of his comedy. We are left with the impression that there is nothing definite about these English comedies, no backbone, and that the writers have no fixed goal; the reader is hustled about from pillar to post and loses his way amid the labyrinths of intrigue and plot. The English writers are too much imbued with the romantic spirit of the Shakespearean drama and its scattering of the interest all over the play on side-issues, irrelevant scenes and situations. This method of working is all very well in the drama, where the epic or historical element may be used to great effect and give a strong sense of fulness of life, but it is altogether out of place in a "problem" play, as all the more serious of Molière's comedies are, and where one definite point has to be proved. To study Molière's plays and afterwards to turn our attention towards the Restoration comic drama, is like leaving a well-ordered park to enter into a rarely-frequented forest of trees; the park contains one main walk, and into this all the smaller walks are made to lead both regularly and artistically. The wood, on the other hand, has a main pathway at the entrance, but this gradually becomes narrower and narrower, so as finally to be undistinguishable from the myriads of by-paths which shoot out on all sides, and lead the hapless traveller into an involved maze from which he finds it most difficult to extricate himself. "Pour les Anglais," says M. Faguet,[1] "l'intérêt, c'est *la sensation de la vie,* . . . pour les Français, c'est *la curiosité satisfaite par logique.* To sum up, the main points of divergence from the methods of Molière which are manifest in the dramatic construction of the Restoration comedies, may be set forth as follows:

(I) The non-observance of the unities of time, place, and action in contrast with Molière's strict adherence to them.

(II) The disjointed and disconnected scenes of the Restoration comedy as compared with Molière's skilfully-contrived "liaison des scènes."

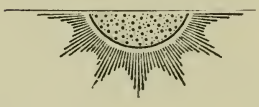
(III) The multiplicity and indistinct nature of the characters of the Restoration dramatists in contrast with those of Molière, whose stage regularly contains but a small number of characters entirely distinct from each other.

(IV) The conscious weakness of the majority of the English writers in that they usually end their comedies with a couplet embodying the moral, whereas Molière may be said to convey precept in allegory, and to leave his hearers or readers to discover the moral for themselves.

(V) The resultant consequence of the other points is the dispersion of the interest all over the play, and the failure

(1) Faguet: "Drame Ancien, Drame Moderne." (Chapter VI.—Les Trois Systèmes).

of any attempt to work out a moral thesis, in contrast with Molière's constant practice of concentrating the interest on one matter of moral moment, a principle so very essential to the writer of a "problem" play, wherein one definite truth has to be established.



## CHAPTER V.

(Molière's adroit combination of realism with idealism, in contrast with the crude realism of the English dramatists.)

(1) Contemporary memoirs and letters go to prove that Molière, while portraying the characters of men of all ages, has at the same time produced a true and lively picture of the various classes of society of his time. These classes were utterly distinct from each other in speech and manner of living, and were never allowed to fuse. The common people, mainly as a result of the furies of the League from which they had just emerged, were uncouth in manners and coarse in conversation. Sganarelle, in "Le Médecin Malgré Lui," is no exaggerated type of this class of citizen. Again, the familiarity and freedom of speech which Molière represents valets and housemaids as being privileged to use in addressing their masters and mistresses, was, to judge from contemporary writings, no exaggeration of what was actually in vogue at that period. The tradespeople and the bourgeois with their lofty ambitions and their aspirations to the rank of the nobility were depicted to the life in such characters as Georges Dandin and Monsieur Jourdain. The medical faculty, as it was at that date, was not in the least unjustly treated by Molière.(2) Furthermore, with regard to Molière's scathing satire on pedants,(3) we have every reason to believe that the dramatist has not over-stated the case. The University of Paris had within its walls many of these men, endued, as Montaigne would have said, with a bookish sufficiency. With regard to the women-characters, and especially such impressive types of character as Les Précieuses Ridicules, Les Femmes Savantes, Madame Jourdain, Madame Pernelle, Bélise, and the waiting-women, all

(1) For this account of Molière and the society of his time, the "Discours Préliminaire" of Petitot (in "Les Œuvres de Molière"—Vol. I.) has been consulted. We have not attempted to exhaust the subject, although sufficient points have been brought forward to establish our proposition.

(2) Petitot quotes what Madame de Sévigné said concerning doctors: "Il n'y a qu'à voir ces messieurs pour ne vouloir jamais les mettre en possession de son corps. J'ai pensé vingt fois à Molière depuis que j'ai vu tout ceci."

(3) Petitot quotes what Jean Guez de Balzac, in one of his letters, says concerning a certain pedant: "Il vient de mourir un vieux poète de l'Université, connu par sa mauvaise mine et par ses mauvaises chausses, disciple de Jodelle, et proche parent d'Amadis Jamin, grand faiseur de madrigaux et de villanelles. Depuis trente ans, il n'était descendu qu'une fois du mont Saint-Hilaire pour passer les ponts. Il chômait la fête de Saint-Jean-Porte-Latine plus religieusement que celle de Pâques. En français il ne disait que Jupin: Il n'appelait jamais le ciel que la calotte du ciel: il rimait toujours trope avec Calliope: il n'eût jamais voulu changer cil pour celui, quand même la mesure du vers le lui eût permis; il tenait bon pour piéca, pour moult, et pour ainçois contre les autres adverbes, à ce qu'il disait plus jeunes et plus efféminés. La nouvelle fut apportée de sa mort au lieu que j'étais par un pédant son admirateur, avec cette redite perpétuelle: Le grand dommage que c'est! et pensa me faire rire de très—bon cœur."

of which were true to the social life of that generation, it can be safely affirmed that Molière has penetrated more deeply into the human heart than any other dramatist has done. He has depicted the two characters of women which give the best ideas of the customs of the time, namely, the flirt and the prude; these two types of character show the opposite excesses into which the majority of the female members of the community then fell. The ideal woman is Eliante, who strikes the happy mean between these excesses and represents the only type of womanhood which is worthy of being loved. But Molière was not content merely to produce a picture of contemporary humours and absurdities; he insisted that it was necessary for comedy to be instructive as well as entertaining. In order to carry out his fixed intention of imparting a moral lesson, Molière did not require to trench on the tragic or the solemn, and in no instance do we detect him becoming pedantic. Another point of importance is that, in general, Molière was sufficiently tactful not to represent literally the foibles of any particular person. Mr. George Meredith, in his brilliant essay on comedy, concisely expresses the truth when he says: (1) "He seized his characters firmly for the central purpose of the play, stamped them in the idea, and by slightly raising and softening the object of study, generalised upon it so as to make it permanently human." (2) Hence have resulted Molière's immortal types which have improved not merely the society of his time, but have lived in the minds of men ever since, and will continue to live for our benefit and instruction. Let us now direct out thoughts to England. It is to the king himself, the mirror of fashion by which courtiers dressed themselves, that it is necessary to look, in order to gain an insight into the character and general mode of life of the court society. Some authentic account of his own personal actions will thus enable us to obtain a clear view of the proceedings of the whole English court. . Such sketches are supplied in abundance by the diaries of Pepys and Evelyn; we cite the following passages in illustration: "I met," (3) writes Pepys,

(1) G. Meredith: "On Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit."

(2) A few words may not be out of place here concerning a charge which has been made against Molière to the effect that his *leading* characters represent abstract qualities, not men. To a certain extent this is true, and yet it does not seem difficult to conceive the actual existence of an Alceste or Tartuffe, a Don Juan, an Arnolphe, although hardly perhaps of a Harpagon. It is true that Molière has not imparted to the *chief* character of each of his plays that essentially human characteristic which makes Shakespeare's creations so realistic. This defect is in part due to the "unities." If there is to be no change of scene, and no lapse of time, the author is bound to bring one phase of human nature prominently forward if a dramatic effect is to result. To say the least, Molière surpasses any other French dramatist in his power of putting life into the representatives of certain human tendencies.

(3) Pepys' "Diary" (July 13th, 1663).

"the queen-mother walking in the Pall Mall, led by my Lord St. Alban's; and finding many coaches at the gate, I found, upon inquiry, that the duchess is brought to bed of a boy; and hearing that the king and queen are rode abroad with the ladies of honour to the park (St. James's), and seeing a great crowd of gallants staying here to see their return, I also stayed, walking up and down. By-and-by the king and queen, who looked in this dress (a white-laced waistcoat, and a crimson short petticoat dressed à la négligence) mighty pretty; and the king rode hand-in-hand with her. Here was also my Lady Castlemaine rode among the rest of the ladies; but the king took no notice of her, nor when she did light did anybody press (as she seemed to expect and stayed for it) to take her down, but was taken down by her own gentlemen. She looked mighty out of humour, and had a yellow plume on her hat (which all took notice of) and yet is very handsome but very melancholy; nor did anybody speak to her, or she so much as smile or speak to anybody." Such a proceeding as this, ostensibly insignificant, might yet suffice to regulate an important state intrigue of the time. It was to such poutings and peevishness of some titled strumpet that the statesmen of France and Holland were bound to look in order to become informed of any indications of peace or war between the three peoples. From Pepys we can acquire some knowledge of the interior of the king's palace and of the events which were of daily occurrence there:[1] "I followed them up into Whitehall, and into the queen's presence, where all the ladies walked, talking and fiddling with their hats and feathers, and changing and trying one another's heads and laughing. But it was the finest sight to see, considering their great beauties and dress, that ever I did see in all my life. But above all, Mrs. Stuart in this dress, with her hat cocked and a red plume, with her sweet eye, little Roman nose, and excellent taille, is now the greatest beauty I ever saw, I think, in my life, and, if ever woman do, exceed my Lady Castlemaine, at least in this dress; nor do I wonder if the king changes, which I really believe is the reason of his coldness to my Lady Castlemaine." We have additional proof of the levity of the king's disposition as manifested by his behaviour at the time of the arrival of the Dutch fleet. To dispel the

(1) Pepys' "Diary" (July 13th, 1663). The description of the court given by Anthony Hamilton (P. 186, Chapter VIII., of "Memoirs of Count Grammont") may be cited here with advantage. "The court was an entire scene of gallantry and amusements, with all the politeness and magnificence which the inclinations of a prince naturally addicted to tenderness and pleasure, could suggest; the beauties were desirous of charming, and the men endeavoured to please; all studied to set themselves off to the best advantage; some distinguished themselves by dancing; others by show and magnificence; some by their wit, many by their amours, but few by their constancy."

fears of Lady Castlemaine was considered by him to be a matter of greater importance than to cope with a peril which menaced the entire nation.[1] "Sir H. Cholmly come to see me this day and tells me the court is as mad as ever, and that the night the Dutch burned our ships the king did sup with my Lady Castlemaine at the Duchess of Monmouth, and they were all mad in the hunting of a poor moth." The serious and pious Evelyn has left a still more vivid account of the character of Charles II. and of his court. In the following description the diarist is alluding to one of the king's accustomed strolls: [2]"I thence walked with him through St. James's Park to the garden, where I both saw and heard a very familiar discourse between Mrs. Nellie, as they called an impudent comedian, she looking out of her garden on a terrace at the top of the wall, and . . . . (here the moral Evelyn omits a passage) standing on the green walk under it, I was heartily sorry at this scene. Thence the king walked to the Duchess of Cleveland, another lady of pleasure and curse of our nation." We also learn from Evelyn the equally indecorous state of affairs in the interior of the palace: [3] "Following his majesty this morning through the gallery, I went, with the few who attended him, into the Duchess of Portsmouth's dressing-room, within her bed-chamber, where she was in her morning loose garment, her maids combing her, newly out of bed, his majesty and the gallants standing about her." The final scene of all, as described by Evelyn on the night of the king's death, gives still greater force to our conception of the character of the king [4] and of his dissolute court: "I can never forget the inexpressible luxury and profaneness, gaming, and all dissoluteness, and, as it were, total forgetfulness of God (it being Sunday evening) which this day se'nnight I was witness of; the king sitting and toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleveland, and Mazarine, etc.; a French boy singing love songs in that glorious gallery, whilst about twenty of the great courtiers and other dissolute persons were at basset round a large table, a bank of at least £2,000 in gold before them; upon which two gentlemen who were with me made reflections with astonishment. Six days after was all in the dust." Before leaving the subject of the character of Charles II. we must not omit to lay stress on the fact that notwithstanding the intriguing but lazy policy of the first fifteen years of the king's life, his

(1) Pepys' "Diary" (June 21st, 1667).
(2) Diary of John Evelyn (March 1st, 1671).
(3) Diary of John Evelyn (October 4th, 1683).
(4) Diary of John Evelyn (February 4th, 1685).

last years afforded eminent proof of his political capabilities.[1] During these first fifteen years his main object was how to escape from the ennui of business affairs ; at last, owing to the fact that Catherine de Braganza did not bear him any children, he was forced to turn his attention in this very direction which was so hateful to him, in order to avoid the loss of his kingly prerogatives. In this crisis, he showed himself to be one of the greatest politicians who ever succeeded in the struggle for power in England. Of such a character, then, was Charles II., the nucleus around which the exquisites of the court gathered, and while considering his faults we can form a fair estimate of those of the bulk of the courtiers.[2] Since the king's mistresses had the greatest influence in the bestowal of court favours, it followed as a natural consequence that nobles, churchmen, literary men, and even the wives and daughters of men of high degree and ambition sought after their society. Honour was thus shown to female wickedness, while female modesty and virtue became subjects for ridicule. From this condition of things were derived the frivolity of conversation, the indecency of language, the blasphemy, the swearing, and the gambling which were so prevalent among the courtiers. Concerning the evil practice of gambling, Richard Seymour, in "The Complete Gamester" (first published in 1674) wrote : "So much was it the fashion among the beau monde that he who in company appeared ignorant of the games in vogue was reckoned low-bred, and hardly fit for conversation." With reference to the extent to which the Puritans were responsible for the outbreak of immorality after the Restoration, we are inclined to accept, in preference to the well-known view of Macaulay, [3] the broader attitude adopted by Mr. G. M. Trevelyan ; the latter historian writes : "The Puritans, as a result of the civil disabilities which they had

(1) For the substance of this idea concerning Charles II.'s latent political abilities, and the ultimate manifestation of them, Mr. G. M. Trevelyn's "England under the Stuarts" has been consulted.

(2) An entry in Pepys' "Diary" (dated 27th July, 1667) is as follows: "Sir John Coventry tells me that the king and court were never in the world so bad as they are now for gaming, swearing, women, and drinking, and the most abominable vices that ever were in the world; so that all must come to nought." We can also point to the testimony of Defoe on the subject of the immorality of the court; in a pamphlet, published in 1698, entitled "The Poor Man's Plea," he expressed himself as follows: "In the time of King Charles the Second, lewdness and debauchery arrived to its meridian; the encouragement it had from the practice and allowance of the court is an invincible demonstration how far the influence of our governors extends in the practice of the people."

(3) Macaulay's description is as follows: "Whatever the canting Roundhead had regarded with reverence was insulted; whatever he had proscribed was favoured. Because he had been scrupulous about trifles, all scruples were treated with derision. Because he had punished illicit love with barbarous severity, virgin purity and conjugal felicity were made a jest." A similar view is expressed by Robert Bell in "The Fortnightly Review," and by Russell in

legally imposed on all Anglicans, found themselves excluded for ever from the governing class, and from fashionable society; and as a result of the similar disabilities which they had practically imposed on all except rigidly moral persons or hypocrites, they saw Society and government given over for one generation at least to open profligacy. But Restoration vice was not merely a reaction against the rule of the censorious; it was also due to the folly of successive Puritan governments, in striking the homes of the Cavaliers with fiscal penalties. The resulting poverty had prevented the resumption of the old manner of life when the war was over. The family life of the rural gentry, that had produced generation after generation of Verneys, Hydes, and Hampdens, had now for twenty years been broken up; its traditions were, therefore, unknown to the younger generation. While his sisters had been living in a corner of the sacked manor-house under the charge of the steward, the heir had been seeking bread for his mouth among the bullies and sharpers of low-life in Dutch port towns, or sponging on the vicious nobility of France and Spain. If youth and obscurity had enabled him to remain at home, without parents or without money, he was often brought up among the grooms, with no instruction in morals and dignity of conduct beyond salt stories of Puritan hypocrisy, in which the defeated veterans found solace and revenge. Whether spent at home or abroad, his youth had been necessarily divorced from the education, religion, and morals of his own land. It is not then surprising that when at the Restoration 'debauchery became loyalty, gravity rebellion,' there were many loyal courtiers and few grave." We feel convinced, however, notwithstanding the corrupt condition of the higher classes of society, that their actions were not the attributes of a nation falling into decay, but rather the indications of a people filled with enthusiasm, vigour, and energy. The rakes and voluptuaries of the court were, in many cases, men of considerable activity in the world of athletics; walking, running, and rowing appear to have been indulged in by them with great zeal. This superabundance of animal

"Modern Europe": (a) "Pleasure is always infectious; but it is particularly so when it comes suddenly, after a long term of unnatural repression. And the recoil in this case was so powerful as to fright the dignified muse of history out of her judicial serenity. The amount of responsibility which attaches to the Puritans for the excesses of the Restoration has never been justly apportioned" (Robert Bell: "The Fortnightly Review.") (b) "Many of the Republicans, but especially the younger sort and the women, were glad to be relieved from the gloomy austerity of the Commonwealth. A general relaxation of manners took place. Pleasure became the universal object, and love the prevailing taste. But that love was rather an appetite than a passion; and though the ladies sacrificed freely to it, they were never able to inspire their paramours with sentiment or delicacy." (Russell's "Modern Europe.")

spirits, moreover, is evidenced by the fighting of numerous duels,[1] the records of which are to be found in the history of the period, and the murderous way-laying such as that in which Dryden was almost cudgelled to death.[2] Besides these incidents, we can point to the midnight fun and frolic of the Scowerers, a name comprising the young gentlemen of the capital, as well as the young country squires who were being initiated into the fashionable customs of city life. The general conduct of these lawless aristocrats was as dangerous to the public as actions such as that of Sir Charles Sedley[3] and his associates were repulsive. This prevailing spirit of recklessness and of misdirected energy is further illustrated by the following passages from Pepys' diary:

"March 20th, 1664. Upon the occasion of some 'prentices being put in the pillory for beating of their masters, in Cheapside, a company of 'prentices came and rescued them, and pulled down the pillory; and they being set up, did pull them down again."

"July 26th, 1664. Great discourse of the fray yesterday in Moorefields, how the butchers did beat the weavers (between whom there hath been ever an old competition for mastery), but at last the weavers rallied and beat them. At first the butchers knocked down all for weavers that had green or blue aprons, till they were fain to pull them off and put them in their breeches. At last the butchers were fain to

(1) An account of a duel is given by Pepys (January 17th, 1668—entry in "Diary"); the combatants were the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Shrewsbury. This incident will serve as an example.

(2) Anthony Wood, in his "Life of Himself" has made the following note touching this affair: *December 16th*, 1679. "John Dryden, the poet, being at Will's coffee-house, in Covent Garden, was about 8 at night soundly cudgelled by three men, the reason, as 'tis supposed, because he had reflected on certain persons in 'Absalom and Architophel.'"

(3) A full account of this disgaceful affair appears in the "Life of Anthony Wood, written by himself" (P. 136: 1663, June). We will quote also a further description which this literary recluse has written concerning the riotous behaviour of other such disreputable characters during their residence at Oxford: "1682, December 21st: This day, about three in the morning, Mrs. Lasenby, the hostess of the Mitre having about three hours before been strangely affrighted by three rude persons, Tho. Baker, M.A., All Souls . . . Oliph, M.A, All Souls, (Edwards of St. John's not among them, but there by accident), these having been drinking at the Mermaid tavern newly opened, after it had been shut a quarter of a year, came drunk to the Mitre, were let in by a boy then up; they came, as they pretended, to eat something; the boy said they were all in bed; they enquired where Mrs. Lasenby lyed; the boy showed the window (which was a lower window); they thereupon awaked her, and desired to have some meat dressed; she said 'twas late and would not, or could not rise, whereupon they called her strange names, as Popish bitch, old Popish whore, and told her she deserved to have her throat cut; whereupon, being extremely frightened, she fell into fits and died at three in the morning; the coroner afterwards sate, and the masters were examined by the vice-chancellor." The incident in which Sir Charles Sedley was concerned (that to which we have made reference) has also been described by Johnson and Pepys.

pull off their sleeves, that they might not be known, and were soundly beaten out of the field, and some deeply wounded and bruised; till at last the weavers went out tryumphing, calling '£100 for a butcher.'" We regard this period as one of vigorous youth set free from all restraint rather than as the time of debauched senility making its final effort for existence. Of not a whit more refined character were the modes of life of the female section of the English aristocratic community. The pages of Pepys abound in notices of a general unblushing profligacy, coarseness, and rudeness among the female sex. A practice which had great vogue at this time both among ladies and gentlemen, was that of masquerading. Burnet, writing of 1668, says: "Both the King and Queen and all the court went about masked, and entered into houses unknown, and danced there with a great deal of wild frolic. In all that people were so disguised that, without being in the secret, none could distinguish them. They were carried about in hackney-chairs. Once, the Queen's chairman, not knowing who she was, went from her. So she was alone, and was much disturbed, and came to Whitehall in a hackney-coach; some say a cart." Ladies could thus repair to the theatre unattended, and hidden by their visors from the public gaze; sometimes they would disguise themselves for a street frolic as if to eclipse the daring deeds of the Scowerers themselves. We are informed that one of the Queen's maids of honour, who afterwards became Duchess of Tyrconnel [1] disguised herself as an orange-wench and cried oranges in the street. These wild excesses of the ladies of high degree afford a further illustration of this stirring spirit which was the characteristic of the age. Now the Restoration comic dramatists [2] while giving us no little insight into the manners and customs of the English people of that time who were resident outside the capital, may be said in the main to hold up a faithful mirror to the various classes of society in London at that period, and more especially to one section of the society, namely, the exquisites of the court and the aristocracy, and also the corresponding female section of that high-born community. We feel assured that the mockery of religious

(1) This incident is recorded in Pepys' "Diary" (February 21st, 1665).

(2) Vanbrugh has tersely expressed the manifesto of the school as follows:

"'Tis now the intent and business of the stage
To copy out the follies of the age,
To hold to every man a faithful glass,
And show him of what species he's an ass."
(Prologue to "The Provok'd Wife.")

observances and of the sanctity of the marriage-tie,[1] subjects which appear repeatedly in the English comedies, were of daily occurrence in the lives of the majority of those who were in the immediate vicinity of the court; that the rakes, voluptuaries, and degraded women, whose sole conversation and thoughts were directed towards concupiscence, and who are conspicuous in the comedies of the Restoration, are true pictures of that depravation of morals into which the court and the aristocracy plunged.[2] Furthermore, the student of this period of our dramatic literature is most forcibly struck by the utter absence of moral purpose from the plays which were written. We are justified in ignoring such statements (made by the authors in their prefaces) which are to the effect that they intend to "hold a mirror up to vice" or "to show the age its own deformity." The dramatists themselves must have been fully aware of the hollowness of such proposals, for, had their intentions been sincere, they would have represented virtue as victorious and vice as vanquished.[3] To declare that they have a moral purpose in view, and afterwards to produce a play which reveals no administration of moral justice, is preposterous; they have neglected to give expression to the only point which could have justified them in their representation of iniquity. We do not accuse the authors of having had any deliberate intentions of exerting a deleterious and demoralising influence upon their audiences, any more than we believe them to have been actuated by any desire to grapple with the task of leading them out of the slough of sin into the ways of righteousness. We are assured that the English dramatists, being well

(1) Pepys has written the following note which will serve as an illustration of the frivolous way in which the state of marriage was treated by the king and his courtiers: "The lords about the king, when he would be jesting with them about their wives, would tell the king that he must have a care of his wife, too, for she hath now the gallant; and they say the king did once ask Montagu how his mistress (meaning the queen) did." (May 20th, 1664).

(2) We have only to refer to the lives of such roués as Buckingham, Dorset, Sedley, and Rochester to find living examples of the disreputable characters represented in the Restoration comedy. It is not difficult to discover frequent allusions to the actions of these and other such debauchees in the diaries and memoirs of the time. Pepys (October 23rd, 1668) classes Dorset along with Sedley as a pattern rake, "running up and down all the night almost naked through the streets; and at last fighting, and being beat by the watch and clapped up all night; and the king takes their parts; and the Lord-Chief-Justice Keeling hath laid the constable by the heels to answer it next sessions; which is a horrid shame." With regard to Rochester, it is interesting to observe what Burnet wrote in 1680 (Some Passages of the life and death of the Right Honourable John, Earl of Rochester): "He told me, for five years together, he was continually drunk; not all the while under the visible effect of it, but his blood was so inflamed that he was not in all that time cool enough to be perfectly master of himself." Sir George Etherege is said to have drawn from Rochester the character of the libertine Dorimant in the "Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter."

(3) It is noteworthy that the Restoration dramatists have not followed Shakespeare in this respect; the latter always represents vice as punished.

acquainted with the tastes of their hearers, adopted the plans which they did adopt as the best and surest means of accomplishing their main purpose, namely, to cause their theatres to be packed to the very doors. [1] The outstanding characteristic of the whole school of English comic dramatists of the Restoration is crude realism ; they have neglected to make use of what was brightest and best in Molière's system, the art which consists not only in exhibiting men as they are, but also in teaching them what they ought to be, an art so skilfully contrived by the French dramatist that his comedies, in contrast with the merely local and temporary interest attached to the English plays, form a school of reformation for men of all ages and of all countries.

There are yet two other important points which cannot fail to attract our observation. In the first place, Restoration comedy differs from that of Molière in that it gives no evidence, on the part of the writers, of an attempt at the portrayal of what may be aptly described as social life ; it brings to our notice the actions of individual characters, but fails to display before us those characters in their social relations with each other. Secondly, it is interesting to notice that whereas Molière had a " philosophy " or view of life, and all his comedies are a manifestation of his general attitude of mind, such unity of inspiration is indisputably absent from the works of the English comic dramatists.

To Molière's attainment of success in the domain of comedy, the intellectual activity of the society of which his hearers formed a part, has certainly contributed in no minor degree. We can fully endorse the opinion expressed by Mr. George Meredith in the following passage : [2] " A society of cultivated men and women is required wherein ideas are current and perceptions quick, that (the writer of comedy) may be supplied with matter and an audience. The semi-

(1) A similar charge, this time an unjust charge, has been made by certain critics against Molière. That Molière was not a man of a merely mercenary dispostition, that his main aims were not merely to elicit applause and to draw a house, are manifest from numerous events in his career. His true love of the stage was in evidence at a very early age; moreover, had his object been solely a selfish one, he would not have become a comic writer and actor at all, but would have been content to succeed his father in the lucrative office in the service of Louis XIV. This true love of the stage was accompanied by a fixed determination to excel in spite of all obstacles which were cast into his way, even by his parents, who felt the sting of dishonour on learning their son's resolve. The valuable experience which Molière gained during his life as a strolling player, and the experience of years, gave him that extensive knowledge of human nature which is manifest in all his plays. In order to carry out the sentiment of his motto, "Castigat ridendo mores," Molière, in the words of Sarcey (Vol. II. of "Quarante Ans de Théâtre"), "éclaire ses semblables et pose sur les fondrières des lanternes qui crient en leur langage: Casse-cou!"

(2) Mr. George Meredith: "An Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit."

barbarism of merely giddy communities and feverish emotional periods, repel him." Now a powerful refining influence on French society had been at work for a considerable number of years before the production of Molière's comedies. We refer to the Hôtel de Rambouillet, the importance of which was at its height between 1630 and 1640.[1] The original salutary objects of this most famous of all literary salons, its striving after refinement of expression, the desire to develop the art of polite conversation, to cultivate good taste and to encourage good manners, were latterly superseded by a tendency towards affectation and pedantry. Moreover, the numerous coteries which came into being after the Fronde, by their overwrought delicacy and their habit of attaching more importance to the manner than to the matter of discourse, caused what was originally a wholesome tendency to become utterly ridiculous. But there can be no question that the influence of these salon-coteries, although of injurious effect in some directions, yet acted effectually to bring about a vast improvement in the manners, the speech, and the tastes of that society which Molière was able, by dint of his subtle power of penetration, to divert, and in which he was successful in awakening thoughtful laughter. In England, on the contrary, there had been no such refining agency to render those who were present at the acting of the comedies capable of appreciating the true comic spirit. The English audiences were incapable of giving vent to that downright, hearty laughter in which the hearers of Molière's masterpieces were enabled to indulge. They could congratulate themselves on having whiled away an hour agreeably, but on little else besides. The pleasure which they derived was merely superficial, so utterly unlike that occasioned by Molière's depth and penetration of thought.

(1) The importance of the Hôtel de Rambouillet ended in 1648, owing to the Fronde and other causes; Julie d'Angennes retired in 1645, and became Duchess of Montausier, and Voiture, the chief of the School of *coterie poets* who wrote "vers de société," died in 1648.

## CONCLUSION.

We believe we have shown in the foregoing exposition that Molière has exerted a considerable influence upon the Restoration comedy. We have endeavoured to show the nature and the range of this influence, and, as far as Molière and his French imitators are concerned, there appears to be no doubt that the Restoration dramatists borrowed from them whatever they found useful, namely, a plentiful supply of ideas for plots, brilliant strokes of wit, grand displays of satire, entertaining characters, interesting scenes and situations, and that they added some base metal of their own. The classic refinement of Molière is, however, entirely absent from the English plays. Moreover, the English writers are far inferior to Molière as dramatic artists, and have not profited by his splendid system of concentrating the interest on one central question of moral importance, by the simplicity of his subjects and the paucity of his incidents which result in the throwing out of ideas more clearly and quickly, by the skilful linking together of the scenes of each of his comedies, and by the clear distinction between the various characters which is manifest in the works of Molière. They may be said, in general, to have taken from him the matter and not the manner, "the letter and not the spirit," to have made great use of the mere externals, but to have neglected the moral tendencies, the art, the philosophy, the vitality of Molière's plays. Furthermore, they have not grasped Molière's high aims to improve society by showing up its weaknesses and vices. As they were deficient in these respects, and were only able to amuse the corrupt society of their time, it is easy to understand that they were unsuccessful in interesting subsequent generations whose tastes and ideals were different. Whereas Molière, who appeals not only to his own times but to mankind in its universality, lives on to the present day, the comic dramatists of the Restoration have all but fallen into oblivion.

# APPENDIX.*

| Dramatist | Play | English Translations and Adaptations | English Plays partly influenced by the French Comic Drama |
|---|---|---|---|
| Molière ... | L'Etourdi (1653)† | Duke of Newcastle's translation | (*a*) "The Comical Revenge, or Love in a Tub" (1664), by Sir George Etherege.<br>(*b*) Dryden's "Sir Martin Mar-all" (1664).<br>(*c*) Mrs. Centlivre's "The Busy-Body" (1709) and "Marplot in Lisbon" (1710). |
| Ditto ... | Le Dépit Amoureux (1654) | Vanbrugh's "The Mistake" (1705) | (*a*) Etherege's "The Comical Revenge" (1664).<br>(*b*) Dryden's "An Evening's Love" (1668).<br>(*c*) Congreve's "The Way of the World" (1700). |
| Ditto ... | Les Précieuses Ridicules (1659) | Translation brought out at the Theatre Royal in September, 1668 (according to Pepys) | (*a*) Etherege's "The Comical Revenge" (1664).<br>(*b*) Flecknoe's "Damoiselles à la Mode" (1667).<br>(*c*) Etherege's "Sir Fopling Flutter, or The Man of Mode" (1676).<br>(*d*) Mrs. Behn's "The False Count, or a New Way to play an Old Game" (1682).<br>(*e*) Crown's "Sir Courtly Nice, or It Cannot Be" (1685).<br>(*f*) Shadwell's "Bury Fair" (1689).<br>(*g*) Congreve's "Old Bachelor" (1691).<br>(*h*) Congreve's "Double Dealer" (1694). |
| Ditto ... | Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire (1660) | (*a*) Act II of Davenant's "The Playhouse to be Let" (1663)<br>(*b*) Translated by Vanbrugh (1707) "Cuckold in Conceit." | "Tom Essence," or "The Modish Wife," by Thomas Rawlins (1676), [mentioned by Paul Lacroix in "Bibliographie Molièresque."] |
| Ditto ... | Don Garcie de Navarre (1661) | | |

* The dates are those of the earliest known representations of the various plays.

† The numbers placed by the names of certain plays refer to notes at the end of the Appendix.

| Dramatist | Play | English Translations and Adaptations | English Plays partly influenced by the French Comic Drama |
|---|---|---|---|
| Molière ... | L'Ecole des Maris (1661) | | (*a*) Sedley's "The Mulberry Garden" (1668).<br>(*b*) Wycherley's "The Country Wife" (1675).<br>(*c*) Shadwell's "Squire of Alsatia" (1688).<br>(*d*) Congreve's "The Way of the World" (1700). |
| Ditto .. | Les Fâcheux (1661) | Shadwell's "The Sullen Lovers, or the Impertinents" (1668) | |
| Ditto .. | L'Ecole des Femmes (1662) | (*a*) "Sir Solomon," a translation by Pope's Friend Caryl (1669)<br>(*b*) Wycherley's "The Country Wife" (1675) | (*a*) Wycherley's "The Gentleman Dancing Master" (1672)<br>(*b*) Ravenscroft's "London Cuckolds" (1683) (partly borrowed also from Scarron's "La Précaution Inutile") (IX).<br>(*c*) Congreve's "Old Bachelor" (1691).<br>(*d*) Congreve's "The Way of the World" (1700). |
| Ditto ... | "Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes" (1663) | A comedy called "The Stage Beaux Tossed in a Blanket" (1670 circ.) | Wycherley's "The Plain Dealer" (1677). |
| Ditto ... | "L'Impromptu de Versailles" (1663) | | |
| Ditto ... | "Le Mariage Forcé" (1664) | | (*a*) Ravenscroft's "Scaramouch a Philosopher" (1677) (VI.)<br>(*b*) Mrs. Centlivre's "Love's Contrivance" (1703) |
| Ditto ... | La Princesse d' Elide (1664) | | |
| Ditto ... | L'Ile Enchantée (1664) | | |
| Ditto .. | Don Juan ou Le Festin de Pierre (1664) | Shadwell's "The Libertine" (1676) | |

## Appendix.

| Dramatist | Play | English Translations and Adaptations | English Plays partly influenced by the French Comic Drama |
|---|---|---|---|
| Molière ... | Tartuffe (1665) | (*a*) Medbourne's "Tartuffe or the French (I.) Puritan" (1670)<br>(*b*) Cibber's "Non-Juror" (1717) | (*a*) Etherege's "She would if she could" (1668).<br>(*b*) Crown's "The English Friar" (1689).<br>(*c*) Congreve's "Double Dealer" (1694)<br>(*d*) Congreve's "The Way of the World" (1700) |
| Ditto ... | "L'Amour Médecin" (1665) | A comedy entitled "The Quacks, or Love's the Physician" (produced at Drury Lane, 1705) | Lacy's "The Dumb Lady, or the Farrier made Physician" (1669) |
| Ditto ... | "Le Misanthrope" (1665) | | (*a*) Wycherley's "Plain Dealer" (1677)<br>(*b*) Congreve's "Old Bachelor" (1691)<br>(*c*) Congreve's "Double Dealer" (1694)<br>(*d*) Congreve's "The Way of the World" (1700) |
| Ditto ... | "Le Médecin malgré lui" (1666) | "The Metamorphosis," or "The Old Lover outwitted" (1704) [mentioned by P. Lacroix in "Bibliographie Molièresque."] | (*a*) Lacy's "The Dumb Lady" (1669)<br>(*b*) Mrs. Centlivre's "Love's Contrivance" (1703) |
| Ditto ... | Mélicerte (1666) | | |
| Ditto .. | Pastorale comique (1666) | | |
| Ditto ... | Le Sicilien ou L'Amour Peintre (1666) | | (*a*) Crown's "Country Wit" (1675) (V.)<br>(*b*) Steele's "The Tender Husband, or the Accomplish'd Fools" (1705) |
| Ditto ... | Amphitryon (1668) | Dryden's "Amphitryon" (1690) | |
| Ditto ... | L'Avare (1668) | Shadwell's "The Miser" (1671) (III.) | |
| Ditto ... | Georges Dandin (1668) | Betterton's "The Amorous Widow or the Wanton Wife" (1670) (II.) | |

| Dramatist | Play | English Translations and Adaptations | English Plays partly influenced by the French Comic Drama |
|---|---|---|---|
| Molière ... | M. de Pourceaugnac (1669) | Vanbrugh's "Squire Trelooby" (1704) | (*a*) Ravenscroft's "Mamamouchi or the Citizen turned Gentleman" (1671) (IV.)<br>(*b*) Ravenscroft's "Careless Lovers" (1673) (IV.)<br>(*c*) Mrs. Behn's "Sir Patient Fancy" (1678) |
| Ditto ... | Les Amants Magnifiques (1670) | | |
| Ditto ... | Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme (1670) (IV ) | Ravenscroft's "Mamamouchi, or the Citizen turned Gentleman" (1671) | (*a*) Ravenscroft's "Scaramouch a Philosopher" (1677) (VI.)<br>(*b*) Vanbrugh's "Relapse, or Virtue in Danger" (1697)<br>(*c*) Farquhar's "Love and a Bottle" (1698) |
| Molière, P. Corneille, Quinault | Psyché (1671) | Shadwell's "Psyche" (1675) | |
| Molière ... | Les Fourberies de Scapin (1671) | Otway's "Cheats of Scapin" (1677) (VII.) | Ravenscroft's "Scaramouch a Philosopher" (1677) |
| Ditto ... | "La Comtesse d' Escarbagnas" (1671) | | |
| Ditto ... | "Les Femmes Savantes" (1672) | (*a*) Wright's "The Female Virtuosoes" (1693)<br>(*b*) Cibber's "The Refusal, or ths Ladies' Philosophy" (1721) | (*a*) Congreve's "The Double Dealer" (1691)<br>(*b*) Congreve's "The Old Bachelor" (1694) |
| Ditto ... | "Le Malade Imaginaire" (1673) | | Mrs. Behn's "Sir Patient Fancy" (1678) (VIII.) |
| Racine ... | "Les Plaideurs" (1668) | | Wycherley's "The Plain Dealer" (1677). (The Widow Blackacre and Racine's Comtesse) |
| Quinault... | "L'Amant Indiscret, ou Le Maître Etourdi" (1654) | | Dryden's "Sir Martin Mar-all" (1667) |

| Dramatist | Play | English Translations and Adaptations | English Plays partly influenced by the French Comic Drama |
|---|---|---|---|
| Quinault... | "Agrippa" | John Dancer's tragi-comedy "Agrippa, King of Alba, or the False Tiberinus" (1675) | |
| Boursault | "Les Fables d'Esope" (1690) | Vanbrugh's "Æsop" (1697) | |
| Thomas Corneille | "Le Feint Astrologue" | Dryden's "An Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer" (1668) | |
| Ditto ... | "Nicodeme" | John Dancer's tragi-comedy, "Nicodeme" (1671) | |
| Ditto ... | "Les Engagements du Hasard" | | Ravenscroft's "Wrangling Lovers, or the Invisible Mistress" (1677) |
| Regnard | Le Joueur (1696) | Mrs. Centlivre's "The Gamester" (1705) | |
| Dancourt | La Maison de Campagne (1688) | Vanbrugh's "The Country House" (1702 circ.) | |
| Ditto ... | "Les Bourgeoises à la Mode" (1692) | Vanbrugh's "The Confederacy" (1705) | Richard Estcourt's "The Fair Example, or the Modish Citizens" (1703) |
| Brueys & Palaprat | "Le Grondeur" (1691) | Sedley's "The Grumbler" (1702) | |
| Le Sage... | "Le Traître Puni" (1700) | Vanbrugh's "The False Friend" (1702) | |

(I.) In Genest's "English Stage" occurs the following note: "Theatre Royal, 1670: Tartuffe or the French Puritan; this comedy said in the title-page to have been written in French by Molière, and rendered into English, with much addition and advantage by M. Medbourne, servant to his Royal Highness—in the dedication Medbourne says: "how successful it has proved in the action, the advantages made by the actors, and the satisfaction received by so many audiences have sufficiently proclaimed." Molière's play has been three times adapted to the English stage—

first by Medbourne, then by Cibber (Non-Juror)—and lastly by Bickerstaffe (Hypocrite, Nov. 17th, 1768, acted at Drury Lane).

(II.) Genest writes (in Vol. I., Page 108—"English Stage"): "*Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1670:* 'Amorous Widow, or Wanton Wife'—this comedy continued on the acting list for many years; that part of it which is taken from George Dandin is very good, the other part of it is indifferent—Molière's piece was acted for the first time in 1668—as it is only in 3 acts, Betterton added an underplot—Lady Laycock, the Amorous Widow, is vastly 'prone to an iteration of nuptials,' of which she gives broad hints both to Cunningham and Lovemore—her last resource is the Viscount Sansterre, but even with him she only experiences another disappointment."

(III.) Genest writes: "Shadwell founded his play on the Miser of Molière—but as the French piece had too little action for an English theatre, he added above 8 new characters—the Miser was the last play acted at the Theatre Royal before that theatre was burnt."

(IV.) Genest has a useful note on "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac" and Ravenscroft's "Citizen turn'd Gentleman" on pp. 125, 126, 127 in Vol. I. He says: "Ravenscroft is in general a dexterous plagiary—in this instance he has rather failed—Molière's two pieces appear to disadvantage by being jumbled together—Ravenscroft has, however, produced a pretty good farce in five acts." Downes says: "This play was looked down upon by the critics as a foolish one, yet it was acted nine days together with a full house—Nokes in old Jorden pleased the King and court better than in any character, except Sir Martin Mar-all."

Genest also writes on the subject of Ravenscroft's "Careless Lovers" (1673): "Ravenscroft in writing "Mamamouchi" borrowed largely from "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac," but having omitted the women and children, he introduces them here; notwithstanding that the "Careless Lovers" was written in a great hurry, yet it is far from a bad play."

(V.) "Country Wit" (of Crown) acted at Dorset Gardens in 1675. Genest writes: "Sir Thomas Rash had entered into a contract with Lady Faddle for the marriage of his daughter Christina with Lady Faddle's nephew, Sir Mannerly Shallow—Christina is in love with Ramble—he is seriously in love with her—but this does not prevent him from having an intrigue with Betty Frisque—Betty Frisque is kept by an old debauch'd lord—in the 4th act Ramble visits her as a painter—his man Merry, in the disguise of an Attorney, diverts Lord Drybone's attention, and gives

Ramble an opportunity of talking to Betty Frisque—this is borrowed from Molière's "Sicilien"—Sir Mannerly Shallow is the Country Wit ; he had never been out of Cumberland—on his arrival in town, he mistakes Tom Rash the porter, for Sir Thomas Rash, and marries his daughter—this part of the plot is highly improbable—this comedy was written by Crown—on the whole it is a good play—it was printed without the performers' names—Nokes and Underhill probably acted Sir Mannerly and his man Booby—the scene lies in the Pall Mall in 1675"

(VI.) Genest writes concerning Ravenscroft's "Scaramouch a Philosopher" (1677) : "This is a laughable farce in five acts—much better calculated for representation than perusal—the greater part of it is taken from the Forced Marriage and Scapin of Molière." Laingbaine observes : "Notwithstanding our author's boasting, I believe he cannot justly challenge any part of a scene as the genuine offering of his own brain."

(VII.) Concerning the "Cheats of Scapin," Genest writes : "This is an excellent farce—it is taken from Molière —but great part of it comes originally from the Phormio of Terence."

(VIII.) Genest (Vol. I., p. 242) writes on the subject of "Sir Patient Fancy" : "The outlines of Sir Patient's character, so far as he fancies himself a great invalid have been taken from Molière's 'Le Malade Imaginaire.'"

(IX.) Langbaine, referring to Ravenscroft's "London Cuckolds" (printed in 1683) speaks of "that part of it where Peggy in armour watcheth her husband's night-cap." He says that possibly these two characters were drawn from those of Arnolphe and Agnès in Molière's "L'Ecole des Femmes."

[*Vu pour impression :*

*Rennes, le 12 avril 1907.*

*Le Président*

*du Jury,*

*J. LOTH.*]

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